
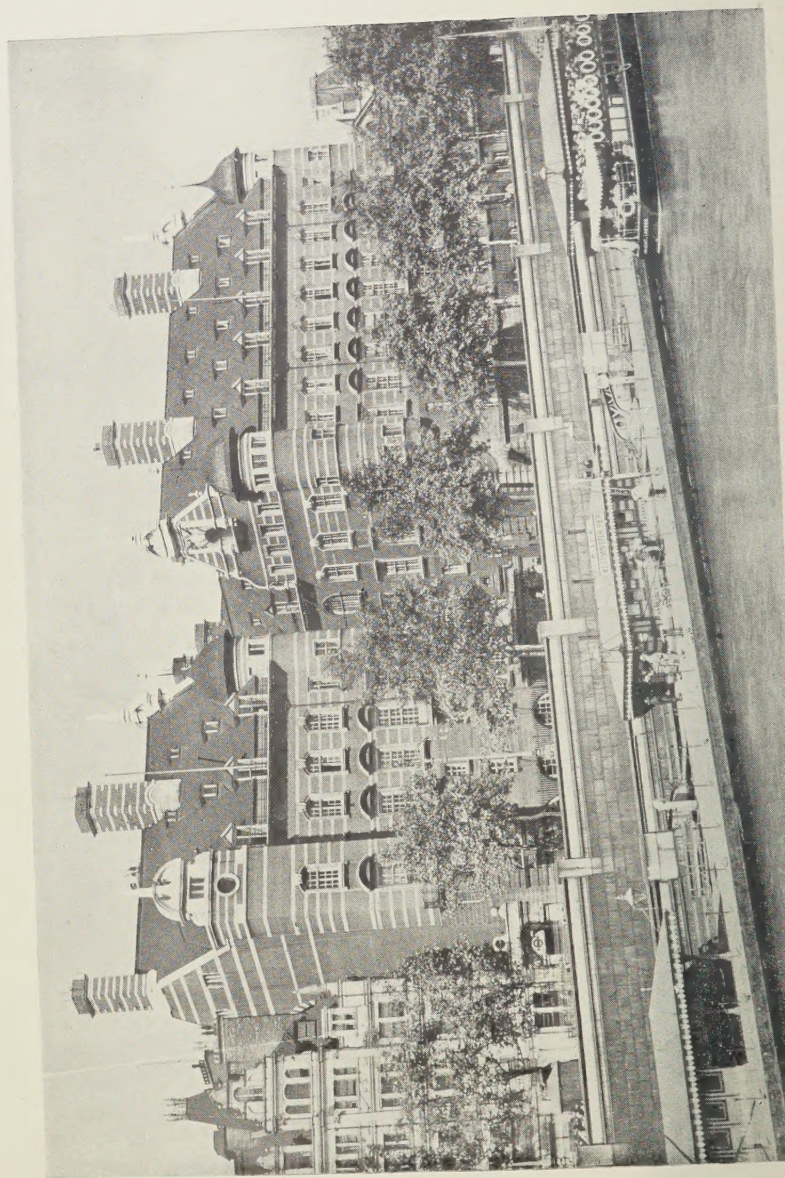


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THE STORY OF SCOTLAND YARD



THE STORY OF SCOTLAND YARD

By
GEORGE DILNOT



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FOREWORD

It is a singular fact that although the Metropolitan Police has been in existence for well-nigh a century, no attempt to compile its history has hitherto been made.

In this book I have tried to tell something of the debt that civilisation owes to Scotland Yard and its founders. To essay such a subject within the compass of a single volume has inevitably resulted in inadequate treatment of many phases of development and organisation. You will find here, for instance, little about the Special Constabulary. Such subjects as identification and traffic, in their relation to police, might well form material for books in themselves. Here it is possible to refer to them in little more than outline.

I have endeavoured to set down a sketch of the growth of a great public service which may serve to show the debt which London in particular, and the world in general, owes to Scotland Yard.

GEORGE DILNOT.

TEDDINGTON.

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THE STORY OF SCOTLAND YARD

BOOK I

THE GROWTH OF SCOTLAND YARD

CHAPTER I

THE METROPOLITAN POLICE

DOMINATING the river, within a stone's throw of the Houses of Parliament, stands a building of stone and red brick, a symbol, rarely appreciated, of the civilisation of the greatest city in the world. Of the thousands who pass it every day very few recognise it as the Metropolitan Police Office—New Scotland Yard—which holds within its strong fingers the peace and security of seven million people and the guardianship of incalculable millions of property.

To the glamour of the name have succumbed countless writers of imaginative fiction. They have invested it with a fictitious romance utterly unlike the very real romance to which it has claim. The police of London are an unobtrusive body. We seldom hear of them until they are wanted. The names of those who in any other profession would have achieved world-wide fame, are now almost forgotten. Great feats of organisation are in ancient official archives; gallant deeds are perhaps recorded in the dusty files of old newspapers; here and there a great piece of detective work is recalled in some compendium of crime.

To tell in all its detail the full story of Scotland Yard would be a task sufficient to daunt the most indefatigable, the most discreet historian. For the evolution of the police of London is largely the tale of modern civilisation. Scotland Yard has marched to its purposes in an era of social reform in so many shapes, that it is difficult to imagine any step of progress which has not had its reaction on crime and public order, and so directly or indirectly upon the affairs of police. Yet, with all

this, Scotland Yard may look back for near a hundred years during which it has left no inconsiderable mark not only upon London, but upon the world. In tens of thousands of cities, in scores of countries, men are invested with the serenity of law and order because of the lessons learned from the Metropolitan Police. Wherever the Anglo-Saxon police system exists it has borrowed its most valuable qualities from Scotland Yard.

No pretence can be made that Scotland Yard is perfect. It has made its blunders for which it has not often escaped blame; it has had its triumphs which have not so frequently been blazoned to the world.

With all its imperfections—and it is not yet free from them—it remains to-day the nearest to the ideal of a perfect police force. In ninety-seven years this big, pliable, effective machine has become one of the most formidable instruments of civilisation the world has ever known.

It is a far cry to the time when Patrick Colquhoun wrote his famous "Treatise on the Police of the Metropolis," which was the beginning of the end of the bad old days. The ripples from the stone he flung have not done widening yet. Scotland Yard is still restlessly at work multiplying devices for the confusion of the evil-doer. The quiet, systematic endeavour to make crime unprofitable still goes on.

We have taught the world that a body of police can be none the less efficient though their hands are clean; and that honesty is not necessarily a synonym for stupidity. There have been few cases of the *agent provocateur* in the London police, and the "grafter" has had little opportunity to exercise his talents.

What the force is, what it has been, is due to the men of the force itself from Commissioner to constable. It has had fine words, and often shabby neglect. The role of scapegoat it has endured with meek philosophy. Governments have been moved to palliate grievances only when they became unbearable. For onerous duties it has, until recently, been vilely requited in a material sense. Yet its loyalty has seldom faltered, and never really failed.

Nominally Scotland Yard is concerned only with London—or rather with an area of fifteen miles from Charing Cross—and it is mainly with its affairs as a London police that the succeeding chapters will be found to deal. Actually it is the only national police force in the country, and it is in large measure a co-ordinating factor in the jumble of jurisdictions which we are pleased to call the police system of this country.

A proportion of provincial officers attend its detective training classes; and in 1925 there were established instructional courses for senior officers of the overseas forces.

Imagine, then, an army encamped over seven hundred square miles with its outposts in every quarter of the globe—an army engaged in never-ceasing warfare with the guerillas of crime and disorder, in which the decencies of conflict are observed only on one side. There are many things our police may not do. They have no such licence, for example, as is granted to the police of the Continent in taking measures against suspects or criminals. Always they have to observe that cardinal rule of British justice which declares that a man must be assumed innocent until he is proved guilty.

There are overwhelming volumes of statistics by which it may always be proved that the police of yesterday were better or worse than those of to-day. But however admirably compiled, figures of crime may only be relied upon in a broad sense. Fresh laws, increased accuracy of record, a revision of categories, are among the factors that tend to obscure direct comparisons. The administrators of the Metropolitan Police have not always been gifted with supreme wisdom, but the force has been lucky in most of its heads. Here and there it may seem to have retrogressed. But in general it has moved steadily forward, spite of adequate equipment grudged, spite of red tape, spite of sufficient men denied.

Consider the force of to-day. In a city of seven million souls, crammed with incalculable wealth, the number of habitual thieves is something under a thousand, while big and little receivers certainly do not number more than two hundred. In spite of all its temptations, at a round figure there are but sixteen thousand indictable crimes committed in a year. And bear in mind that, although in a technical sense indictable crime includes all serious crime, in practice it may include the most trivial offences. The office boy who steals the stamps may be indicted.

The value of property stolen annually in London is very slightly above half a million pounds, and of this roughly a quarter is recovered. Unsolved murder mysteries are of infrequent occurrence. That is why London has fewer murders in a year than some American cities have in a month. The more certain you make detection the fewer crimes you will have.

Compare this record with that of any city in the world. Ask Paris, ask New York, ask Vienna, and you will come to

realise how well protected London is. You will understand why the traditions of Scotland Yard are the envy of every police establishment in the world. It is the crimes which are not committed, rather than the crimes detected, that are the greatest proof of an effective police.

There are ways of attacking crime—ways of maintaining good order—so indirect that their real purpose may be missed by the unobservant. Some of the duties performed by the Metropolitan Police are not in the strict sense of the word police duties at all. It is held by many people—the writer among them—that it would be well to relieve the police of these tasks, although it cannot be denied that some of them may have a bearing on the results of the war with crime.

Scotland Yard will license a chimney-sweep or test a motor omnibus; look after a lost child or a lost pearl necklace. There are close upon eighty Acts of Parliament affecting intimately the police of London, as well, of course, as practically all criminal legislation and innumerable minor regulations.

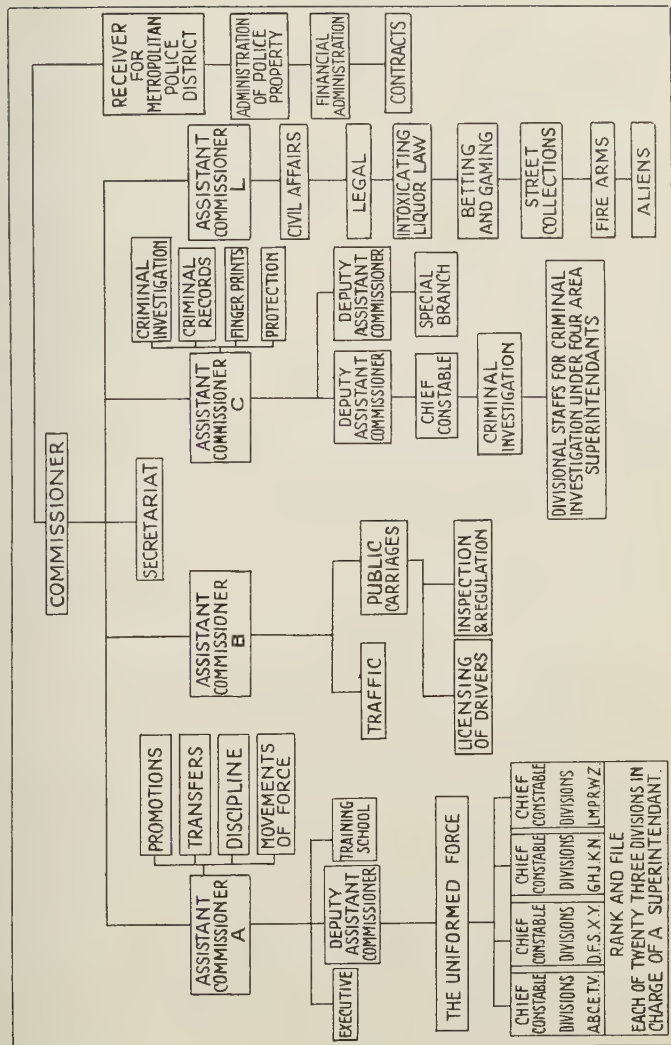
Conceive, then, the complexities of this vast business with its twenty thousand men, its annual expenditure of eight million pounds (of which the pay roll alone absorbs six millions), which is responsible for the security of some seven and a half million people, and property of a rateable value of sixty-three million pounds within an area of seven hundred square miles. The problems that have to be faced by the Commissioner and his lieutenants vary from year to year, almost from day to day, and no man can foretell what contingency may have to be faced at any given moment. Only supreme organisation can adapt the chain which holds the peace of London to the strain that may suddenly be put upon it.

Yet it is less than a hundred years since the Metropolitan Police was born. It has become a gigantic instrument, and it has learnt many lessons since those days. But we owe much to that comparatively tiny group of men who laid the foundations of a new police system for the world. The principles upon which the force was founded remain unaltered.

One year after the Metropolitan Police came into being—in 1830—the force was composed of 3,314 men, divided into seventeen divisions among an estimated population of 1,212,491. There were no detectives. Now there are, in round figures, 20,000 men, 22 divisions, and nearly 900 detectives.

Of the 187 police forces in England and Wales the Metropolitan Force is the only one not under local control. It is

THE ORGANISATION OF THE METROPOLITAN POLICE.



State force, and its general supervision is in the hands of the Home Secretary, who is responsible to Parliament. Under him is a Commissioner—often erroneously described as “Chief Commissioner”—who is appointed by a Crown warrant and receives a salary of £3,000 a year. The Commissioner’s immediate lieutenants are four Assistant Commissioners, also appointed by the Crown. One of these is Deputy Commissioner. Each of these has direct control of some section of the work of administration. There are three Deputy Assistant Commissioners. These form, so to speak, the general staff of the police.

London is apportioned into four districts, and in each of these a Chief Constable has control. There are also two Chief Constables attached to specialist departments at Scotland Yard.

Next in rank are the superintendents. There are thirty-five officers of this grade in the service, the majority of whom are charged with the supervision of a division. The duties of these men are arduous and responsible, for it is in the division that constant contact is maintained with the public. The strength of a division may be anything from five hundred to a thousand men. Thereafter the ranks in the service run:

Chief Inspector.

Sub-Divisional Inspector.

Inspector.

Station Sergeant.

Section Sergeant.

Acting Sergeant.

Constables (in various classes).

The Criminal Investigation Department is slightly different. It has four superintendents in charge of areas, and inspectors and sergeants are ranked in classes.

The men of the force are distributed generally among close upon two hundred police stations in the Metropolis. Some, however, are detailed for special work with which London, as London, has nothing to do, and for which it does not pay. Thus there are the King’s Household Police; detachments on special duties at the Houses of Parliament; men employed by the Navy, Army, and Air Force—although the number called upon by the services has of late been reduced by the substitution of Royal Marine Police, and War Department Constabulary. There are detectives engaged at the Royal Mint and the Post

Office. The Metropolitan Police, in fact, have many duties besides the policing of London.

The drain upon the human resources of the force imposed in this manner is very large. In point of fact London is much under-policed. For the individual policeman is on duty for forty-eight hours a week, and it is an inexorable fact that the week contains 168 hours. A very simple calculation will show that less than one-third of the force is available for routine duty at any given time. But from the men available must be deducted those on special duty and those on reserve, so that in fact, there is left a margin of not many more than 9,800 men available for ordinary duty on beats and at fixed points. If this number were equally divided by three, it would leave 3,266 men on duty at one time. In practice, however, the majority of police are on night work. Although exact figures are not available, it is a reasonable assumption that there are times when the patrol of between 70,000 and 80,000 miles of streets is left to the comparative handful of 2,000 men.

As I have said, the annual cost of upkeep of the Metropolitan Police is in the neighbourhood of £8,000,000, half of which is found by the Government and half by the ratepayers of London—though the latter have no voice except through Parliament on the manner in which it is spent. The collection and expenditure of this money, which is called the Police Fund, is the work of the Receiver of Police and his staff. The Receiver is the financial administrator of the police, and his office is even older than that of the Commissioner of Police for it was created in 1792 to administer the funds of the Metropolitan Police Courts.¹ The Receiver ranks as a colleague and not as a subordinate, of the Commissioner, and, like him, is appointed by the Crown. He recognises the Home Secretary as his chief and issues his own independent report. Not a penny can be spent by any police officer, not even the Commissioner, without the sanction of the Receiver.

The Receiver is the manager of all police property and has wide powers in dealing with it. All money in connection with the force is paid by or to him. He deals with salaries, pensions, buildings, clothing, equipment, fines, fees, compensation and all matters of similar kind. He has a staff of a hundred or so to assist him including, in addition to clerks, expert accountants, architects, engineers, bootmakers and tailors.

A not unimportant and hardly worked part of the establishment at Scotland Yard is the Civil Service Branch, which

seldom in the limelight, and seldom gets due public appreciation of its services. There are some 250 persons on this staff under the Secretary of the Metropolitan Police, who aid in the work of administration. Also engaged upon clerical duties are fifty police officers.

Among other officials the Chief Medical Officers of the force have their office at Scotland Yard. The health of men exposed at all hours to the rigours of the weather, as well as the physical risks incidental to the policemen's calling, is a matter of no small concern, and adequate measures are taken to ensure their well-being. Under the Physician (who is the Chief Medical Officer) and the Surgeon to the Force are Divisional Surgeons—usually local practitioners—appointed to the various stations to attend to police or prisoners or any other medical matter on which they may be called in.

In the following pages I have tried to sketch the story of the manner in which the guardianship of London has been perfected. Out of the bare bones of the original scheme the Metropolitan Police has made itself. It has worked out a new science—the science of police—with little help save its own experience. It has built up its great reputation under the vigilantly suspicious eye of critics ever ready to visit the sins of one individual upon the whole service. From the tiny, suspected, and reviled force of 3,000 men has grown the great organisation of to-day. In its progress it has fought unceasingly for the peace of the Metropolis, but not without vicissitudes. It is of its vicissitudes, its triumphs and its failures that I have to write.

CHAPTER II

THE REIGN OF LAWLESSNESS

BEFORE the coming of Scotland Yard, law and order, as we understand them to-day, were only words in London. A penal code, which punished with savage rigour great or small offenders, did little to safeguard either the persons or the pockets of its citizens. No man's life or property was safe and a vast organised orgy of crime was in being. Burglars, footpads, pickpockets, blackmailers, gaming-house cheats, lottery insurance sharpers, coiners and other pests thrived and plundered to their hearts' content.

Those who have read of the Tammany scandals of a few generations since in America may be interested to learn that "graft" of a very similar kind was rampant in London very little over a century ago. A House of Commons Committee in 1816 elicited that certain districts of the Metropolis were largely dominated by a firm of brewers, through their interest with the Chairman of the licensing magistrates, one Sir Daniel Williams.

This gentleman, with another magistrate, Joseph Merceron and various satellites, saw many ways of making money through their official positions. No publican could hope for a licence unless he dealt with the brewers they favoured; and, if he fell in with their views, he might do as he liked short of murder. There could be no doubt, in the words of one member of the Committee, that in thousands of these houses it was a circumstance of nightly occurrence that there were scenes of riot, drunkenness, and debauchery of every description, and that they were the Alsatia of thieves and prostitutes. Another sidelight on the "graft" of the age is given by the fact that the unpaid office of High Constable of many districts—"a position of high trust and laborious duty"—was one that was eagerly sought after.

If the police had in themselves been efficient this kind of thing could not have long survived. In point of fact, and

nchoate, muddled, disconnected police system—or rather several systems—was in force. Every parish was supposed to appoint and pay its own watchmen with head-boroughs or constables in charge. In no parish were the arrangements anything like efficient. The City of London and Westminster made a poor best of this feeble organisation. Kensington, one of the richest districts in London, had, for instance, three head-boroughs and three watchmen. The Marylebone watch was composed of Chelsea Pensioners. A dozen or more London parishes made no pretence at all of keeping a police force, among them Wandsworth, Putney, Fulham, Chiswick, Acton, Edgware, Barnet, and Deptford. Even those places where a watch was kept did not worry unduly about the selection of their guardians as long as they were cheap. Men, it is known, were often chosen because they were on the rates. The pay was miserable—sometimes no more than twopence per hour. Small wonder that the type of men employed were decrepit, lazy, dishonest and cowardly.

The watchmen, in fact, were the butts and the laughing-stock of the town. The young bloods made a pastime of baiting them. Sir Nathaniel Conant, the Chief Magistrate at Bow Street in 1812, declared the watchman to be “generally an old man, dozing in his watchbox in the interval between crying the hours and when he is moving.”

A contemporary satirist referred to them thus:

“Wanted, a hundred thousand men for London watchmen. None need apply for this lucrative situation without being the age of sixty, seventy, eighty or ninety years; blind with one eye and seeing very little with the other; crippled in one or both legs; deaf as a post; with an asthmatical cough that tears them to pieces; whose speed will keep pace with a snail, and the strength of whose arm would not be able to arrest an old washerwoman of fourscore returned from a hard day’s fag at the washtub; whose constitution is worn out in hard service, either in the army or navy, some unhealthy business, or from the effects of a gay and profligate life; and that such will neither see or hear what belongs to their duty, or what does not, unless well palmed or garnished for the same.”

There was an old street song to the same effect:

A watchman I am, and I knows all the rounds—
The housekeepers, the strays, and the lodgers;
I knows where young cits are a-breaking the bounds,
To join with nightwalkers and codgers.

Down alleys I drives,
 Where men and their wives
 Are drinking and cursing,
 While thieves are cut-pursing;
 While loudly I bawls,
 At the stroke of St. Paul's,
 "Past one o'clock and a cloudy morning."

As I pass through the Row, a rope ladder I spies,
 And Miss Forward expecting her lover;
 If they tips me a crown, I shuts fast my eyes,
 And lets them elope all in clover.
 If the burglar breaks in,
 To take gold is no sin,
 And Bill Pickpurse may pass,
 If he gives us a glass—
 As I drinks and I bawls,
 At the stroke of St. Paul's,
 "Past two o'clock and a cloudy morning."

It is of something more than academic interest that the British theory of police is that every citizen is responsible for the maintenance of law and order. The parish watchmen or constables were mere paid substitutes for persons who were supposed to undertake the duties in turn—somewhat on the principle of jury service.² Back for hundreds of years this system had been in force, with the collateral understanding that each community—village or hundred—was responsible for crime committed within its boundaries, and liable to heavy penalties for any failure to discover and punish a felon. Down to this day a parish may be sued for damage done by riot, and even now it is within the power of the authorities to conscript any person to act as special constable.³

This principle, obviously good in the Middle Ages and plausible enough to be quoted to-day, was one of the chief factors contributing to the reign of lawlessness at the beginning of the last century. It meant incoherence and ineptitude where there should have been co-ordination, training and discipline. As Colquhoun said in the edition of his "Treatise" published in 1800:

"At present the watchmen destined to guard the lives and properties of the inhabitants residing in near eight thousand streets, lanes, courts, and alleys, and about 160,000 houses composing the whole of the Metropolis and its environs, are under the direction of no less than above seventy different Trusts: regulated by perhaps double the number of local acts of Parliament, (varying in many particulars from one another,

under which the directors, guardians, governors, trustees, or vestries, according to the title they assume, are authorised to act,—each attending only to their own particular Ward, Parish, Hamlet, Liberty, or Precinct.”

It was Henry Fielding, whose distinction as a writer has in some measure obscured the debt which we owe him in another direction, who was among the first to see the futility of the police organisations of the eighteenth century. His “Enquiry into the Causes of the Late Increase of Robbers, with some proposals for remedying the growing evil,” was a sane and far-sighted recapitulation of many of the root causes of crime to a theory of police.⁴ Nor was he merely a theorist. For five years he was the Chief Magistrate of Bow Street Public Office,⁵ and in a sense he may be regarded as the first stipendiary head of the London police—although the word “police” was not then in the official vocabulary.

Death was at his elbow. He was a broken man in health and fortune. Yet he worked sixteen hours a day, and in a period when the office of magistrate was looked upon as providing almost unlimited opportunities for extortion and corruption, he, to use his own words, “reduced an income of about £500 a year of the dirtiest money on earth to little more than three hundred, an inconsiderable portion of which remained with my clerk. A predecessor of mine used to boast that he made £1,000 a year in his office; but how he did it is to me a secret. . . . The public will, therefore, I hope, think I betray no secret, when I inform them that I received from Government a yearly pension out of the public service money, which I believe would have been larger had my great patron⁶ been convinced of an error *that mine was a lucrative office.*”

A magistrate in Fielding’s time had executive as well as judicial authority. Thus it was that he was looked to by a despairing Government to purge the town of a gang of cut-throats and robbers. Henry Fielding asked for a sum of £600. With the few officers attached to Bow Street he began to harry the haunts of thieves, raiding and destroying their nests till they were driven from pillar to post. No doubt some of the money was used in the acquisition of information. So far as the particular gang was concerned Fielding says:

“Within a few days . . . the whole gang of cut-throats was entirely dispersed, seven of them were in actual custody, and the rest driven, some out of the town, and others out of the kingdom. Though my health was now reduced to the last

extremity, I continued to act with the utmost vigour against these villains, on examining whom, and in taking the depositions against them, I have often spent whole days, nay sometimes whole nights."

Fielding died in 1754, and his place was taken by his half brother and assistant, no less notable a man. For Sir John Fielding was blind. Yet his energy and initiative were, if anything, in advance of those of his brother. He had a close and intimate acquaintance with all phases of crime, and very distinct ideas on the manner in which it should be suppressed. He it was who brought into being the most efficient service of police for London that was known before the creation of the Metropolitan Force.

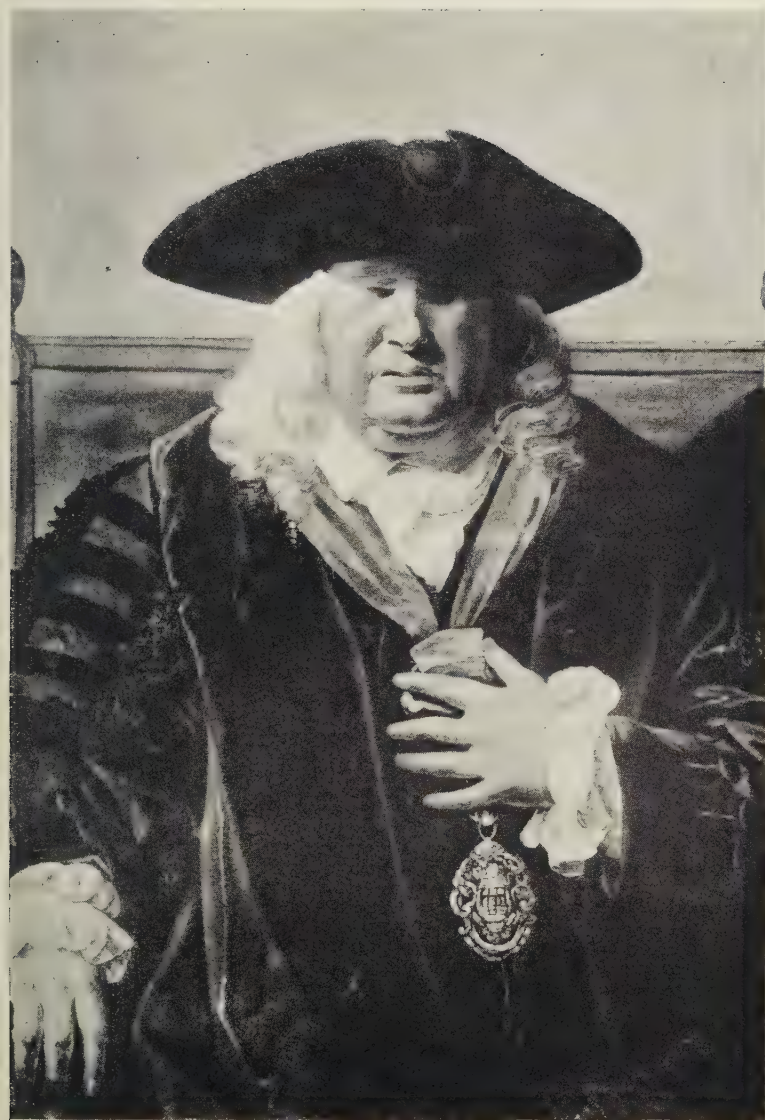
These were the Bow Street patrols and runners. They were disciplined men, and although they had many defects, they were at least under constant supervision, and did, to a point, succeed in holding crime in check.

Of the runners more will be told in the succeeding chapters. The patrol system which Sir John Fielding began was elaborated in later years. The Horse Patrol was designed to check highway robbery on the roads leading to London. In 1805 it consisted of fifty-four men with six inspectors. Mainly these were ex-cavalry soldiers, specially picked men, mounted on good horses and armed with a pistol, cutlass, and truncheon. They wore a uniform which consisted of a leathern hat, a blue coat with yellow buttons, blue trousers and top-boots, and, of course, they had the inevitable scarlet waistcoat which was the distinguishing badge of the Bow Street officer. They each received a weekly salary of 28s.

These men guarded the outer highroads of London. Near to them in there was the Dismounted Patrol,⁷ which moved in bodies under a conductor about the main roads of the inner suburbs. Both the Mounted and the Dismounted Patrols were on duty only for certain hours at night.

There were night and day patrols in inner London, and although their numbers were small, they no doubt daunted the more flagrant criminals in the neighbourhood of their beats.

It was, in all likelihood, the success of the régime of the Fieldings at Bow Street that led in some degree to one of the first legislative steps in the establishment of a better system. In 1792 the Middlesex Justices Act was framed as an experiment and passed through the House of Commons in the face of strong opposition. It was the death knell of the "trading



SIR JOHN FIELDING
(The Blind Magistrate.)

justices," and for the first time recognised the principle of paid magistrates. The Home Secretary was empowered to appoint seven "Public Offices" in various parts of the Metropolis, each with three justices, who were to receive respectively a stipend of £300 a year. All fees were to go to reduce the expense of upkeep. Constables were to be attached to each office at a salary of 12s. a week each, and they were to be invested with powers of summary arrest.

The principle of the Act was excellent, but it had determined enemies both in and out of Parliament. Such men as Charles Fox and Sheridan fought strenuously against its passage. It was denounced as barbarous and unconstitutional because magistrates were given the power of summary punishment without the aid of a jury. The new constables, with their increased power, would, it was said, be a new instrument of oppression to the poor. It was roundly declared that the Government were merely making a pretext to give a monetary reward to their supporters.

Nevertheless, the Act went on to the Statute Book as an experimental measure for five years. At the end of that time it was renewed, and ultimately its main provisions were incorporated, with certain revisions, in other Acts. By the original Act seven public offices were created in addition to Bow Street. Other courts were added in course of time, but there was scarcely any attempt at uniform action. Each district was independent of the rest, and acted independently. There was small attempt at co-operation. The parish watch, such as it was, remained outside the authority of the magistrates.

One other step in the formation of what that ardent reformer Patrick Colquhoun so happily called the "science of police" was taken in the dying eighteenth century. Thefts on the river were organised on a colossal scale, amounting in the aggregate to something over £500,000 in a year. The shipowners and merchants appealed to Colquhoun to devise some means of checking these enormous depredations. He drew up a scheme for the creation of a "Marine Police Institution."

In 1792 his suggestions were adopted and a river police came into being under its own magistrates and with its own police court, or public office, at Wapping. The two hundred men employed were ex-sailors, and their officers were carefully selected. Certainly they were the most efficient body of police then existing, and their vigilance and activity to a large extent put an end to a wholesale system of plunder.

These, then, were the chief police bodies existing in London at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Including the Thames Police, there were in London but 189 paid police officers giving their whole time to the protection of the Metropolis. The total of all the jumbled police forces has been given as 1,040. Even had the men been able and honest their efforts must have been greatly hindered by the confusion of jurisdiction. But, as I have shown, with a few exceptions they were utterly untrustworthy, and a fierce jealousy existed between the various organisations.

A Kensington officer would not assist one from an adjoining district. Watchmen did not concern themselves to assist the patrols. Graft and blackmail flourished amazingly, and, as might be expected, crime was rampant. Colquhoun estimated that there were eight thousand places where stolen goods were received in London alone, although he thought that there were perhaps not more than fifty or sixty of these who were run by what may be called organisers of crime. There were at least fifty fraudulent mints, and coining was an organised trade. One man alone acknowledged that in several years he had coined half-crowns to the nominal value of £200,000.

These are but instances. Every other phase of crime was practised on a similar scale, almost with impunity. It was not merely the ineptitude of the police that was to blame for the overrunning of the Metropolis with rascals. It may seem a paradox, but it is none the less a fact, that the very severity of the law encouraged people to defy it. When the nineteenth century was born there were two hundred offences punishable by death, and transportation and flogging were among the lightest sentences. The knowledge of the grave results of conviction often deterred people from prosecuting; there were occasions when a jury would not convict in the face of the most overwhelming evidence.

The slightest technical flaw in an indictment was enough of a warrant to let the biggest blackguard free. Criminals knew how wide were the meshes of the net and how easy it was to slip through them.

Public morality in London was at a low ebb. Not only were there gangs, as at Spitalfields, who openly plundered all who passed them, but scores of men, women and children, brought up amid surroundings of squalor and vice, roamed the streets ripe for petty theft or highway robbery. There were thieves

haunts in Westminster where no officer of police dared go without three or four companions.

Shortly before the coming of reform, according to one who assisted in the inauguration of the new force, people were robbed in broad daylight, and "women stripped of their clothes were tied to gates by the roadside; the existing police being set at defiance." Serjeant Ballantine, who looked in no friendly spirit on the "new police," has recorded that "the streets at night exhibited scenes of disorder and unchecked profligacy."

Thinking men had long been engaged in advocating reforms for the evil. Colquhoun, Bentham, Romilly, the Fieldings and others, had by word and deed advocated the imperative necessity of measures of social reform. Each had consciously or unconsciously adopted the argument advanced by Beccaria, that certainty of detection is a greater factor in the prevention of crime than vindictive punishment.

Parliament appointed committee after committee to consider the matter of police. The surging tide of crime had become a menace to the nation. Action became imperative, and in 1829 Sir Robert Peel, then Home Secretary, took action and introduced into the House of Commons his "Act for Improving the Police in and near the Metropolis."

CHAPTER III

THE BOW STREET RUNNERS

IN the preceding chapter I have told how officers were attached to the public offices to act as executives to the magistrates. There were runners at other courts than Bow Street, and some of them—notably the brothers Forrester in the City, from whom Dickens is said to have modelled some characteristics of the Cheeryble brothers—performed great feats of detection. But, generally, the Bow Street men were regarded as the first experts in the science of investigation. It was to Bow Street that the man who wanted a detective in those days invariably turned. Anyone who chose to pay could obtain their services.

Most of them very distinctly knew their jobs. Of their capacity and courage there could be no doubt. Of their morality and honesty it is permissible in many instances to be suspicious.

The red waistcoats of the Bow Street men were a familiar sight in the town. As a badge of office they carried a tiny baton with a gilt crown on top, and they were invariably armed with pistols. They received a guinea a week towards the latter part of their existence—"as a general retainer," explained one Chief Magistrate—but if they were engaged for any purpose they were paid a guinea a day. Yet in spite of these not excessive emoluments—added to on occasion by rewards—many of them contrived to leave considerable fortunes. But those were different days. Detectives do not now do as well as old Townsend, who left £20,000, or his colleague Sayer, who accumulated £30,000.

It must be remembered that the system offered unique temptations and unique facilities. The services of the runner were open to anyone rich enough to pay for them, and an iniquitous method of blood-money was in force. The reward payable for "prosecuting to conviction," in 1800, were:

Highway robbery	£40 (and £10 from the hundred where the crime was committed, besides the horse, furniture, arms and money of the convict).
Coining silver or gold ..	£40.
Coining copper	£10.
Stealing to the value of 5s. from a shop	A Tyburn ticket valued at about £20.
Burglary and housebreaking	£40 (and a Tyburn ticket).
Horse stealing	A Tyburn ticket.
Compounding a felony ..	£40.

Tyburn tickets were certificates that might be assigned, excepting a possessor from all parochial offices. In some parishes one would sell for £30. In others it was worth perhaps no more than £15. In any event it had a distinct pecuniary value.

Men and women were pursued to their deaths for the sake of this blood-money. There were vehement denials when officers and magistrates were questioned at various Parliamentary Committees. Both Townsend and Vickery, well-known runners, declared that they did not make £40 a year from rewards. Yet Townsend on the same occasion admitted: "Officers . . . have it frequently in their power (no question about it) to turn the scale when the beam is level on the other side: I mean against the poor wretched man at the bar; why? This thing called nature says that profit is in the scale; and melancholy to relate but I cannot help being perfectly satisfied that frequently that has been the means of convicting many and many a man."

He was equally emphatic on other temptations: "Temptation would be frequently thrown in officers' way; and how is it possible to avoid those temptations provided the officer has not the means of barring off those temptations by being paid liberally for what he does? . . . I, it is true, have steered clear, but I do not owe that to any merit myself. I have been lucky enough to have situations where I have been very very liberally paid; and whether it has been my own sobriety or attention matters not; but I have had many gratuities and from the first people in the nation, or I might have been as liable to temptation as anyone in London . . . for what is so small a stipend as a guinea a week?"

Old eccentric John Townsend was the most famous of the runners. He had served under Sir John Fielding, and appears

to have been a garrulous, illiterate, conceited but experienced resourceful and courageous man. He was appointed a sort of bodyguard for Royalty and became very full of his own importance. Even King George IV seems to have tolerated Townsend's forcibly expressed opinions on many matters. Townsend bragged that the King imitated his style of hat and that royal dukes sent him wine from their own cellars.

Once, shortly after the accession of William IV, some blunder had resulted in a State carriage being unready to take him to Parliament. In a high rage the monarch swore fiercely that he would hire a hackney coach and proceed to the House of Lords in that humble vehicle. From behind a screen came a stentorian voice:

"I think your Majesty is damned well right."

Startled and amused, the King swung round. "Is that you, Townsend?"

"Yes, sir," was the reply. "I came here to see that your Majesty gets fair play."

It was while William IV was still Duke of Clarence that he, half seriously, suggested to Townsend that the runner should write his memoirs. At this period Townsend's hearing was beginning to fail, but with some little appearance of surprise he agreed to fall in with the suggestion. A few weeks later, when questioned on the subject, he shook his head gravely.

"Oh, sir, you've got me in the devil of a scrape! I had begun to write my amours as you desired, when Mrs. Townsend caught me in the act of writing them, and swore she'd be revenged; for you know, your Royal Highness, I was obliged to divulge many secrets about women for which she will never forgive me."

It would be an injustice, however, to write Townsend down as a fool. He was far from that. He is said to have arrested more criminals with his own hands than any man at Bow Street. He it was who brought to justice Jerry Abershaw, a desperate highwayman, and George Barrington, one of the most notorious of pickpockets. He had an honesty and pride in his duty that goes far to excuse his vanity. Although at his death, in 1832, he left £20,000, he had exceptional opportunities of acquiring this legitimately. He became a fashionable fad, and at great functions it was announced that "Mr. Townsend will attend." He may be pardoned if he became a bit of a *poseur*.



The TOWNS-END.

Mr. O'Sullivan.

JOHN TOWNSEND
(The Bow Street Runner.)

Not all of his contemporaries would have refused to "stash" a case against a wealthy woman thief, when appealed to by a prison governor, and offered £200 by relatives not to give evidence. He knew all sorts of thieves' resorts, but "always kept them at a proper distance; I never drank a glass of wine with those sort of characters."

Among Townsend's contemporaries was Joseph Adkin—"the little ferret"—whose astuteness and courage would have done credit to any detective force in the world. In one case a brutal murder in Staffordshire had baffled all attempts at solution. A large reward was offered for the capture of the murderer, and Adkin was put on the case.

Even in those days the maxim "*Cherchez la femme*" was well understood in detective work, and Adkin concentrated until he found an *inamorata* of the assassin at a house of evil repute in Whitechapel. Disguised as a country labourer he gained admission. Then, in his own words:

"It was long before I could induce her to impart even a word of the information I was there to gain by any means I could devise. At last she admitted that the man I wanted had not been there since the murder I mentioned was committed. 'I can't imagine what's keeping him away so long,' she added, 'but I know he's sure to come, and then I'll hear his light tap on the window shutter.'

"After a week's patient waiting the light tap on the shutter at last was heard. I touched my breast to remind the lady that pistols were there, which I would use in case she broke faith with me. The man came in and started at first when he saw a strange man present, but on being assured by the female that I was a friend of hers, he became quieted, and he and I were soon smoking a friendly pipe together. Watching my opportunity, I threw myself suddenly upon the man, and with the assistance of the woman put the darbies upon his wrists and had him safe, for no man I once collared ever escaped me."

The last notable exploit of "the little ferret" was the capture of a desperate criminal, one Jones. When Adkin began his search he knew that he carried his life in his hands, for it was almost certain the fugitive would resist to the death. There was a resort in the Haymarket in which the runner was convinced that, sooner or later, he would find his man. Here some of the worst characters in London met together to drink and concoct crime. Light and air were admitted to this room through a skylight, and to this Adkin, active as a cat, climbed

night after night to await his quarry. It was a test of patience as well as of courage.

Many nights passed before he was rewarded. Then at last he saw the man he sought enter the room. Adkin did not hesitate a second. He slipped stealthily through the skylight, hung poised for a second, then, daintily as a cat, dropped to a table in the midst of the gang of astounded ruffians. He knew that there was scarcely one among them who would have hesitated to cut his throat. Before they had recovered from their surprise his pistols were out.

"I want Tom Jones," he said, "and I'll shoot the first man who comes between him and me."

His audacity succeeded. No man stirred. "Tom Jones," said Adkin afterwards, "made no move to fight. He let me clap the darbies on him and he came away as quiet as a lamb though he knew well enough that his career was over, and that he'd swing at Tyburn before the end of the month."

Adkin retired shortly after this, to become Governor of Warwick Gaol.

Among the most able of the Bow Street runners was James Vickery, who gained some reputation at the time of the Napoleonic wars, by tracking down and recapturing French prisoners of war who had broken their parole. He was also a very clever thief-taker, and was on one occasion nearly cut to pieces in attempting to arrest two murderers. Often he was away from Bow Street for weeks at a time following criminals through the country.

It was Vickery who got wind of a daring scheme to rob the Post Office. He gave notice to the authorities; but the officials were dubious. A special meeting was called at which the two Postmasters-General—there were two at that time—were present. Vickery was called upon to substantiate his story. With just a touch of melodrama he produced some keys and proceeded to open door after door in the building, until he arrived at the vault where was deposited the treasure which was the objective of the thieves.

One of the Postmasters was still not satisfied. True enough the keys which Vickery had obtained from the would-be thieves would have given them access. But were the plotters really striking at the treasure vault or would they have taken what first came to hand?

Vickery had his answer. "I don't think they would trouble themselves with what is in most of the rooms," he said

Cases that we have had before us teach us that when robbers plan such a really great stroke of business as this, they get to know all they can about where the treasure they want is stored before they strike. I've found out that the men in this plot know the Treasure Room in this building. They'd have come before now, only they believed that by holding back for a few days, the treasure there is now will be increased to twice as much, that can be taken with no more trouble or danger."

After these rigorous precautions were taken, and one of the most colossal robberies ever planned was averted.

The ingenuity of the modern thief is no greater than that of his predecessors. At that day there existed in Ludgate Hill a well-known firm of jewellers, Messrs. Rundle and Brydges. One day, a couple of scrupulously dressed men, plausible and businesslike, called at the shop and intimated that they were prepared to place a very large order.

They were shown the stock and made a careful selection of jewels to the value of £35,000. These, they asked, should be made up in parcels, which they would impress with their own seals. That would do away with all question of mistakes, and they would get the jewellers to hold them until next day, when the gems would be collected and paid for.

This seemed fair enough to the jewellers, and they agreed. The customers left, but when, on the following day, they failed to return, there were some misgivings. However, the parcels were allowed to stand for three days and then they were opened.

It came as a shock to Rundle and Brydges to realise that they had been duped by an ingenious sleight-of-hand trick. The parcels, outwardly the same as those in which the jewels had been packed, contained nothing but rubbish.

Bow Street was applied to, and Vickery took charge of the case. He was afforded a description of the men, who were believed to be Jews, and spoke with a caution that was characteristic. "I believe I know the gents. I'm sorry I can't say I know anything good about them. I know a place where I may earn more. I'll try to find them for you, gentlemen. I may find a trace of them in a few hours, or I may take a couple of days."

Then, as now, the methods used by thieves frequently gave value to their identity, or reduced the possibilities to a narrow circle. Vickery cast about the flash houses of London till he was practically certain that the delinquents were two Jews who had taken flight to the Continent.

Accompanied by Mr. Rundle of the robbed firm, he crossed the Channel. He tried every likely spot where jewels might be taken for disposal—Paris, Brussels, Antwerp, Amsterdam, and, at last, Frankfort. Here, a receiver who had bought the bulk of the stolen jewels was traced, and with the help of the Frankfort police, made to disgorge a matter of £20,000 worth of the stolen property. Vickery received £500 from the firm as a reward. He ultimately became Governor of Coldbath Fields Prison.

There are, or were, two officers named Keys in the Metropolitan Police, who have had careers of distinction in the force. It would be interesting to learn whether they are descended from one of the most astute and energetic of the Bow Street runners who bore the same name. He was a terror to coiners, and won his spurs in a case of this nature.

A man named Coleman was suspected of the manufacture of false coin. So wary and circumspect was he, however, that proof was difficult to acquire. It seemed impossible to locate his den.

Keys pitted his wits against the coiner. He hired a man who, garbed as a milkman, haunted the street where Coleman was believed to have his lair. Day after day for two months the vigil continued, and the runner's emissary had begun to think the business hopeless. But Keys hung pertinaciously on.

Patience was at last rewarded. One morning Coleman cautiously reconnoitred the street, and seeing no one but the milkman, to whose presence by this time he attached no significance, proceeded to feed some chickens. The watcher hastily informed Keys that he had located the private mint, and that night the runner and other officers paid a surprise visit.

"When I got to the top of the stairs," said Keys, "I could hear Jem and his woman, Rhoda Coleman as she was called, conversing about the coin while working. . . . I was about to break the door in with my foot; in fact, I had lifted my leg up, and had placed my other leg against the opposite wall for that purpose, when I heard Coleman say, 'Rhoda, go and get us a quartern of gin.' I waited about two minutes, and she opened the door to go out for the gin. I and my comrades rushed in, and secured Coleman with the moulds and wore him red-hot in his hands. He was surprised but cool. 'Do you want me, master?' he said, looking up in my face. 'Of course I do, Jem,' said I; and having handcuffed him, proceeded to search the place."

The man was convicted and hung. The woman was acquitted. There was a grim sequel. "Rhoda," said Keys, removed the body to her lodgings, and kept it for twelve days. I had information three times that if I went I should find Rhoda coining again, and that the moulds, etc., were concealed in the coffin under the body of poor Jem Coleman. This, I afterwards ascertained, was a fact."

These are a selection of typical cases associated with the Bow Street runners. An interesting book might in itself be constructed of their adventures and exploits. Space will not permit of stories of men like the intrepid Ruthven, who took a leading part in the arrest of the Cato Street Conspirators; of Macmanus, "mild yet terrible"; of Lavender, who makes so brief an appearance in one of Stevenson's books; of Bishop and Armstrong; and others who did good work in the bad old days.

On balance there is something to be said for the runners. But many of them were far from immaculate. The "blood-money" temptation has been already referred to. But there were other things. Often the officers concerned themselves more with the recovery of stolen property than with the arrest of thieves. A House of Commons Committee in 1828 discovered some extraordinary facts. It was notorious that the runners were not immune from bribery, but beyond that a trade grew up of compromising robberies on a fixed percentage, which the banking houses encouraged and in which the Bow Street men acted as intermediaries. The Committee said:

"A great majority of these cases have taken place where large depredations have been committed upon country bankers. Two banks that had severally been robbed of notes to the amount of £4,000, recovered them on payment of £1,000 each. In another case £2,200 was restored out of £3,200 stolen, for £230 or £240. In another case Spanish bonds, nominally worth £2,000, were given back on payment of £100. In another, where bills had been stolen of £16,000 or £17,000 value, but which were not easily negotiable by the thieves, restitution of £6,000 was offered for £300. In another case, £3,000 seems to have been restored for £19 per cent. In another case, where the robbery was to the amount of £7,000, and the supposed robbers (most notorious 'putters-up' and 'fences') had been apprehended, and remanded by the magistrate for examination, the prosecution was suddenly desisted from and the property subsequently restored for a sum not

ascertained. In the case of another bank, the sum stolen being not less than £20,000, is stated to have been bought by the thieves by a receiver for £200; and £2,800 taken of the legal owners as the price of restitution. There is proof more than sixteen banks having sought, by these means, to indemnify themselves for their losses, and that property of various sorts, to a value of above £200,000, has within a few years been the subject of negotiation or compromise. They have proof of nearly £12,000 having been paid to them by the bankers only, accompanied by a clearance from every risk, and perfect impunity to their crimes."

One of the most remarkable of this type of case was the Paisley Bank robbery. This was organised and carried out by one Jemmy Mackoull, a notorious professional thief and receiver known as "the Heathen Philosopher." With the aid of confederates he got away with £20,000, or a bit more, in gold and notes. The notes, however, seemed likely to become difficult to negotiate. So Mackoull and his friends, each suspicious of the other—on their return to London, resolved to negotiate with the bank.

Sayer, a Bow Street runner of much skill, had been put on their track, and promptly seized Mackoull's principal confederate, an escaped convict named White. Mackoull himself had a very narrow escape.

This promptitude blew a hole in the plans of the thieves, for with one of their number in the shadow of death, and the rest threatened, they were not in a strong position.

Negotiations were therefore begun at the "Brown Bear," a "flash house" in Bow Street. Sayer undertook to see the bank agent, and arrange that there should be a "rake-off" for all concerned. Accordingly he laid down the terms for the authorities. There was to be restitution of the money; White and another escaped convict were to be pardoned; no action was to be taken against any of the other parties to the robbery.

This agreed, Sayer one night took Mackoull's wife to the agent. She carried a small basket in which she said were the notes that her husband possessed. They were counted out, and the lady and the runner professed equal astonishment with the agent on discovering that the restored sum only amounted to £11,941. The thieves had apparently secured immunity, while still retaining a large portion of their booty.

The tale does not end here. Mackoull disappeared, and

a story calculated to discourage pursuit was spread that he had gone to the West Indies. However, a year or so later he reappeared in London and was promptly arrested, and sent to Glasgow for trial. There the bank, which seems to have been fairly trusting, dropped the case on the promise of further restitution—a promise, of course, which Mackoull did not keep. Instead, he had the effrontery to set up as a bill broker in Scotland, and trade with the stolen notes. Again he was arrested, and again discharged, but this time the stolen notes were impounded. Impudence reached its limit when Mackoull began an action for their recovery.

The bank then enlisted the services of an officer named Donovan, whose official position in Scotland was something analogous to that of a runner, and asked him to secure evidence that Mackoull was implicated in the original robbery. With patience, resource and tact, he followed the tracks of the robbers to London, picking up much evidence on the way. In London Sayer flatly refused to help in the enquiry or to give evidence. But Lavender did help, and in the end Mrs. Mackoull was persuaded to become a witness.

Mackoull lost his case. For the third time he was arrested. Proof against him was plain and he was sentenced to death. A reprieve was granted, but he died, a madman, within the year.

Still the story continues. For Sayer then took up his abode with Mrs. Mackoull, and lived with her many years, until she was killed in an accident. He lived for long afterwards, and died at last worth £30,000. Just before he died he pointed to a cupboard and a fire, apparently trying to convey that he wished something destroyed.

After his death the stolen notes once more began to appear in circulation. They were traced to a relative of Sayer, who had found them in the cupboard to which the old runner had pointed. How Sayer had got them was never made absolutely clear, but doubts are clearly permissible. It is conceivable that one of three things had happened. He might have received them as “graft”; he might have held back a portion of the plunder on his own account; or they might have come into his possession when he took Mackoull’s wife under his protection. The reader may make a choice.

CHAPTER IV

THE BIRTH OF THE MODERN POLICE

THERE is no statue of Dr. Patrick Colquhoun at Scotland Yard, but there ought to be. For to him, more than to any man, the Metropolitan Police owes its existence. Colquhoun was a Middlesex magistrate of great experience and sagacity who devoted much of his life to the attempt to persuade the Government and the public that the devil should be fought with fire. In other words, he pressed the theory that the organised and casual crime which existed at the close of the eighteenth and dawn of the nineteenth century should be met by the opposition of a superior organisation of police.

He was no mere academic theorist. He knew the evils that had to be dealt with and the most practical way of dealing with them. His success in organising a river police was a convincing proof of his capacity. His "Treatise on the Police of the Metropolis" had insight, imagination and knowledge. Chiefly he urged discipline and co-ordination under one responsible control. He wanted information on crime promptly classified, indexed for reference, and disseminated among police officers. In this connection it may be said that he himself issued the first *Police Gazette*, which was circulated in all parts of the country, and aided to bring many offenders to justice. The supervision of pawnbrokers and other trades which offered facilities for the disposal of stolen goods was one of the planks in his platform. Similarly he pressed that public carriages should be licensed. At that time something like a half of the cabmen of London were in league with thieves. He wanted a Public Prosecutor.

In fact, most of the ideas which he then put forward are now the accepted principles of police. To recapitulate them all would be to repeat points that have been incorporated either into Acts of Parliament or are common matters of police practice. In short, Colquhoun devised a practical science


police. But it took time to convince the authorities, and even after they had been convinced it was long ere they acted.

Many of Colquhoun's ideas were presented in the form of recommendations by a Parliamentary Committee in 1798. They went the way of many other committee reports for the preceding twenty and the following thirty years. They were seemingly pigeon-holed.

POLICE

OR, HUE

Published by



GAZETTE;

AND CRY.

Authority.

0.1.]
FRIDAY, JANUARY 18, 1828.
[PRICE SEVENPENCE.

Noting the Substance of all Informations received in Cases of Felonies, and Misdemeanors of an aggravated nature; and against Receivers of Stolen Goods, reported Thieves and Offenders escaped from Custody, with the time, the place, and every particular circumstance, including the Offence. The Names of Persons charged, who are known to be in Custody, and of those who are not known, their Apprehension, Dress, and every other part of identity that can be described. The Names of Accessories and Accessories, with every other particular which may tend to their Apprehension. The Names of all Persons brought before the Magistrates, charged with any of the Offences mentioned, and neither committed for Trial, Re-examination, or to a competent disposal of. Also a Description of Property that has been Stolen, and particularly of Stolen Horses, with as much particularity as can be given, with every circumstance that may be useful for the purpose of Tracing and Recovering it.

THE OLD "HUE AND CRY."

THE

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THE MODERN "POLICE GAZETTE."

But the haphazard system of protecting a great city could not go on for ever. The report of a House of Commons Committee in 1828 was the last straw. This insisted, with emphasis, that a time had come when it was absolutely necessary to devise some means to give greater security to person and property. Statistics showed that there was one criminal to every 822 of the population—an increase of 41 per cent. in seven years. James Grant, writing ten years afterwards, asserted that the number of persons who in 1828 lived by

thieving in the Metropolis could not have been under thirty thousand; and that the amount of property stolen must have been close upon two million pounds.

At last something was done. Sir Robert Peel, then Home Secretary, took the matter in hand, and on April 15, 1829 introduced in the House of Commons "An Act for Improving the Police in and near the Metropolis." The way had been partly paved by the success of the Royal Irish Constabulary established as the Dublin Police in 1786, which, however, was modelled upon semi-military lines.

The preamble to the Act said:

"Whereas offences against property have of late increased in and near the Metropolis; and the local establishments of nightly watch and nightly police have been found inadequate to the prevention and detection of crime, by reason of the frequent unfitness of the individuals employed, the insufficiency of their number, the limited sphere of their authority and their want of connection and co-operation with each other. And whereas it is expedient to substitute a new and more efficient system of police in lieu of such establishments of nightly watch and nightly police, within the limits hereinafter mentioned, and to constitute an office of police, which acting under the immediate authority of one of His Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State, shall direct and control the whole of such new system of police within those limits: Be it therefore enacted," etc.

Peel in an able speech unfolded his plan. He spoke of the increase of crime and recapitulated the notorious defects of the existing police system. After referring to the fact that repeated proposals for reform had been dropped, he declared his intention of no longer allowing petty parochial jealousy to outweigh considerations of the well-being of the community. "The chief requisites of an efficient police are unity of design and the responsibility of its agents, both of which are not only not insured by the present parochial watch-house system, but are actually prevented by it. The House is aware that each parish has its own watch-house establishment, its own watchmen, its own discipline, and its own responsibility; and it is left to the parochial authorities alone to devise and enforce and control the means of protecting the property and persons of its inhabitants."

The Duke of Wellington, then Prime Minister, flung the whole weight of his influence into the scale for the Bill. He



THE OLD BOW STREET OFFICE.

argued that a police system such as that outlined must have a good result in the better prevention of crime.

As I have said, Peel's scheme was in essence that of Patrick Colquhoun. It was intended to have a coherent disciplined police force for the whole of London. The statesman, however, foresaw the difficulties that lay in the way of bringing it into immediate effect. He proposed, therefore, that a central agency under the control of two justices of the peace should gradually become the sole police authority. Various areas were to be taken over as the new force enlarged and became more practised in its duties. It was to commence in Westminster, and ultimately extend to all districts within a radius of fifteen miles of Charing Cross.

Summarised, the chief provisions of the Act were:

A new office of police to be established under the immediate authority of the Home Secretary.

Two justices to be appointed to control the force, and to frame regulations for its management, subject to the Home Secretary's approval.

Financial matters to be dealt with by a Receiver specially appointed, and a Police Rate to be collected by Overseers. This not to exceed eightpence in the pound.⁸

The existing watch to continue to discharge its duties until notified of the appointment of the new police, and then to hand over its equipment.

On that Act of Peel's, which provided the skeleton, has been built up the flesh and bones of a police science now followed by all Anglo-Saxon and many of the other countries of the world. The Act had been deftly drawn up, its aim being not to touch the principles in the existing system which were sound, but ruthlessly to cut away all that was rotten.

It might have been a good thing for this country if the Government had gone further at a later stage, and put the whole of the police of the country under one control. That was not to be. Truth to say, there were enough troubles to surmount.

The British distrust of officialism was deep-rooted, and fears at once took light. The preliminary steps to the formation of the new force were viewed with suspicion and antagonism. Only the most delicate tact and fairness on the part of the authorities saved the new ship from wreck ere it was fully launched.

The two justices appointed to initiate the new force could not have been better chosen. One was a comparatively young man of thirty-three, Mr. (later Sir) Richard Mayne, the son of an Irish judge, who for six years had practised at the Bar. The judgment that put him in this delicate post was amply justified in the years to come. The other was an older man, Colonel (later Sir) Charles Rowan, a soldier of high reputation who had fought at Waterloo, and who had gained some experience of police work in the Royal Irish Constabulary. Both men were able administrators, and possessed enormous tact and firmness.

The Act was passed on June 29, 1829, and came into force on September 29 of the same year. It was to police Westminster first of all, and its headquarters were to be situated in a street off Whitehall called Whitehall Place. It was not till years later that a detective branch was located in Scotland Yard adjoining.

For the time there still remained several other bodies of police outside the orders of the new justices. These were:

The Bow Street Horse Patrol, under the control of the Chief Magistrate at Bow Street.

The Police Office Constables or Runners, under the control of magistrates.

The Marine Police, under the control of the magistrate of the Thames Police Office.

Watchmen and other officers, under the control of the City of London.

The official title of the headquarters of the new force was "The Metropolitan Police Office," which it still retains, while the older police offices have been differentiated by the title "police courts." There was one wide-reaching change in the old order of things—the separation of the judicial and administrative functions. The two justices—whose title was shortly afterwards changed to Commissioners—had only to manage the force. To this day the Commissioner and Assistant Commissioners are justices of the peace, although they are prohibited from sitting in court.

On every hand the heads of the new force were beset by pitfalls. The men who, hitherto, had been supposed to hold the guardianship of London had done little to raise the reputation of the office of constable. Nowadays a police officer had behind him the prestige of the service. Then there was n

prestige save such as the new organisation might make for itself.

There began a wholesale and rigorous weeding-out of the old gang. The Commissioners, upheld by Peel, were ruthlessly determined to prevent the service becoming contaminated at its birth.⁹ An unpleasant task was faced with resolution. There was the inevitable series of dismissals of all the old parish watchmen not physically or morally capable of being used in the new scheme. The public sympathy was with the discharged men, and loud and persistent was the outcry against the dismissal of old public servants. But the Commissioners held grimly to their course.

They had to create a police force out of nothing—to make it an efficient, incorruptible instrument of justice. They had to take young men of limited education, and teach them not only drill, but tact and forbearance in carrying out difficult duties. The range from which they could select their recruits was not a wide one, as the fact that the pay of a constable was but 19s. a week, with no pension rights, will show. Moreover, all candidates had to be under thirty-five years of age, to be at least 5 feet 8 inches tall,¹⁰ and to undergo a medical inspection.

The Commissioners went steadily to work, and in September, 1829, six divisions came into being. A withering blast of public opprobrium at once broke upon the heads of the “new police.” Where the old “Charlies” had been ridiculed, the new force was reviled. The wildest accusations, the most preposterous charges, were levelled at them and their authors.

One story had it that the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel were concerned in an insidious plot to establish a standing army of drilled and armed men to seize the throne. The people were to be tyrannised over, to become the slaves of a military *gendarmérie*. There were not wanting newspapers to fan the flame of popular prejudice to a white-hot blaze. Almost every class of the population was stirred by a deep distrust.

Nicknames still exist which were invented in those days to ridicule the police. They were “peelers,” “bobbies,” “crushers,” “coppers,” “lobsters,” and a variety of other uncomplimentary epithets were invented by the fertile wits of the age to apply to them.

Small regard was paid to facts in the campaign of vilification. The only form of disciplined police control of which the public had any knowledge was the Continental system. They could

not grasp the wide difference of intention in the new force. They feared the police would assume an arbitrary authority that there would follow its formation a system of espionage and harassing official interference into the concerns of everyday life.

It is possible that the new weapon of justice and order was the more finely tempered in the fire of public opinion than would have been the case had it been more generally approved. All those concerned in its creation were conscious that millions of vigilant eyes, alert, even anxious, to observe any dubious action, were fixed upon the force.

Sane and far-sighted, the Commissioners took a sensible course to check the widespread distrust. Instead of ignoring the flood of complaints that began to pour in upon them, they received in person anyone who had a real or fancied grievance. Every complaint was sifted, and when a member of the force was found to be in fault punishment was swift and severe.¹¹

In spite of all obstacles the force had made sufficient progress in five months to allow of seven new divisions being added, and in the following May four more were established, making seventeen in all. The Metropolitan Police invaded London from Hampstead to Wandsworth, from Kensington to Stepney.¹²

Peel had already expressed his belief that the experiment was a success. Writing to the Duke of Wellington, who had delivered himself of the quaint comment, "I congratulate you on the entire success of the Police in London; it is impossible to see anything more respectable than they are," he said:

"I am very glad indeed to hear that you think well of the Police. It has given me from first to last more trouble than anything I ever undertook. But the men are gaining a knowledge of their duties so rapidly that I am very sanguine of the ultimate result. I want to teach people that liberty does not consist in having your houses robbed by organised gangs of thieves, and in leaving the principal streets of London in the nightly possession of drunken women and vagabonds."

There remained some vital gaps in Peel's plan. As I have said, although the inept parish watch was abolished, there still remained certain smaller police organisations which had survived the transformation. This state of duplicated authority could not last. There was continual friction with these rivals, who were not above tactics on occasion which savoured of petty spite and malice.

The Horse Patrol was the first of these to be swallowed up. This amalgamation took place after the Metropolitan Police had been in being for seven years. The men became mounted constables doing duty on the outer main roads. The consolidation, besides increasing efficiency, effected a saving of over £1,000 a year.¹³

There was trouble, too, with the Thames Police. So far from there being any co-operation between them, there was distinct disinclination on the part of the watermen to have any dealings with the land police. Said one superintendent of the Metropolitan Police to a House of Commons Committee in 1838: "I know nothing at all of the Thames Police; they may not exist for anything I know of; I find that within a period of two years, notwithstanding our imperfect jurisdiction, from having no communication with the police of the river, that we have apprehended offenders in thirty-seven cases of offences committed on the river." Asked if there was any disinclination on the part of the Thames Police to furnish information he replied: "Certainly; they never will communicate anything; if they are on shore looking after persons, and they are asked if they want one they say 'No.'"

Something of the same kind of spirit was observable in the relations of the Metropolitan Police and the jumble of police jurisdictions in the City. There was no communication, or scarcely any, between them. Sir Richard Mayne explained this.

"The day and night police (of the City) being distinct, that which is transmitted to the day police there is no mode of communicating to the night police, and that which is communicated to the night police to the day; at night also the (City) police is under such numerous heads, divided in such numerous bodies, that it would be extremely difficult to communicate to them all; now on the other hand, it is obviously impossible from such a body to obtain the communication of any useful knowledge; we never receive any."

Many witnesses drew unfavourable comparisons between the then existing police system in the City and the Metropolitan Police. There were in fact thirty separate police authorities in the City. Each of these was run by a sort of committee, and no police can be thoroughly effective which is run by a committee. Quite apart from this, all the obvious and inherent defects of the old method of police were retained. One witness told of a lady who was robbed near the Bank. "I took some pains to find a policeman; I passed through

Lothbury into Bartholomew Lane, Threadneedle Street, and Cornhill. . . . I thought that was a very extraordinary thing and I said, 'I think it is worth while to step into the Mansion House and tell the sitting magistrate what has occurred.' I told him; he said, 'That is very extraordinary; how could it happen that you could find but one man?' He sent for one of the men in attendance below, and asked him, 'How is it there was only one policeman on duty?' 'Oh, my lord,' replied he, 'they are at dinner.'"

The same witness spoke of another City robbery in which a police officer declined to intervene on the ground that it was not in his district.

Neither Mayne nor Rowan concealed his contempt of the City Police of that day. They were quite ready to police the City, and, indeed, estimated that they would save £20,000 a year by doing so.

The Committee strongly agreed. It reported: "Though it appears repeated endeavours have been made during the last ten years to introduce into the City a plan of Police similar to that which has been established with so much advantage and success in the other parts of the Metropolis, yet Your Committee cannot but regret, that any part of a system justly condemned by so many intelligent and competent persons should have been thus long suffered to continue. This reluctance to reform may be attributed to that indisposition to transfer the patronage or power, now exercised by many individuals, to one department."

Peel himself wanted the City included in the Metropolitan Police area, but there were powerful interests involved. It is likely, however, that the City would have been swallowed up had it not been for two things. It remodelled its police on the lines of the Metropolitan Force, and it undertook to bear all the expense of maintenance itself.

This was the only important recommendation of the 1833 Committee¹⁴ that was not carried into effect. The Thames Police was absorbed, and the police courts were staffed by officers of the Metropolitan Police. Magistrates were confined to judicial duties, and the appointment restricted to barristers. The powers of the magistrates were enlarged in certain directions, and steps were taken to improve the accommodation—which was then very bad—in the various police courts.¹⁵

CHAPTER V

EARLY TRIALS

UNDER the tactful rule of Mayne and Rowan the Metropolitan Police bravely faced the storm of public opposition. Mayne it was who framed the regulations that have become the basis of the police code of this country. Many of them will be found in the Instruction Book issued to the police of the present day.

"The primary object of an efficient Police," he said, "is the prevention of crime; the next that of detection and punishment of offenders if crime is committed.

"To these ends all the efforts of Police must be directed. The protection of life and property, the preservation of public tranquillity, and the absence of crime, will alone prove whether those efforts have been successful, and whether the objects for which the Police were appointed have been attained."

He urged upon constables the necessity of "a perfect command of temper." A police officer was "never to suffer himself to be moved in the slightest degree by any language or threats that may be used." He was to do his duty "in a quiet and determined manner."

These suggestions were supplemented by special orders from time to time. Some of these had an element of humour. Constables were warned that "they must not enter into conversation with servant girls and other females." Here no doubt we find the origin of the tradition of the policeman and the cook, so beloved of the comic papers. The men of the force were not allowed to keep dogs "unless safely locked up."

Another order laid down: "It has appeared in several instances lately that people who were merely talking together have been desired to 'move on,' and much opposition to the police and bad feeling towards them have been in consequence created. The constables are to recollect on all occasions that they are required to execute their duty with good temper and discretion; any instance of unnecessary violence by them, in striking the party in their charge, will be severely punished. A constable must not use his staff because the party in his

custody is violent in behaviour or his language. Constables are not to use language towards parties in custody calculated to provoke or offend them; such conduct often creates a resistance in the prisoner, and a hostile feeling among the persons present towards the constable. A constable is to bear in mind that, in taking anyone into custody, he is not justified in doing more than is absolutely necessary."

The Commissioners understood the use of propaganda. They did not quietly sit down under the attacks made upon the force. They replied to them with vigour, even going so far as to publish letters received in praise of the new police. To refute the charges that the police were a disguised military force, or that there was an undue proportion of Irishmen among them, the following figures were published:

In 1832 the force was composed of 135 butchers, 109 bakers, 198 shoemakers, 51 tailors, 402 soldiers, 1,154 labourers, 205 servants, 141 carpenters, 75 bricklayers, 55 blacksmiths, 20 turners, 152 clerks, 141 shopmen, 141 superior mechanics, 46 plumbers and painters, 101 sailors, 51 weavers, and 8 stonemasons. The proportions of nationality were twenty Englishmen to every ten Irishmen and every two Scotsmen.¹⁶

Proof of the efficiency of the new force was afforded by the fact that while, before its creation, highway robberies, burglaries and other thefts were variously estimated to have cost the public from a million to two millions a year, that sum very quickly fell to £20,000.

At the beginning of June, 1830, eight months after it had been formed, the Metropolitan Police was composed as given in Table A, on p. 37.

For the sake of comparison a similar modern return may here be included which gives the strength of the force at the end of 1925. (See Table B, p. 38.)

From the beginning the scheme permitted of a judicious mixture of centralisation and decentralisation. Thus every district was responsible to headquarters, but was able to act upon its own initiative in the case of an emergency, while relying upon the support of its neighbours.

The theory of distribution was that there should be 144 constables to a division, under the command of a superintendent. These were to be divided into sections of nine men under a sergeant, with an inspector to each four sergeants. In practice, however, the numbers were varied according to the circumstances of each district.

TABLE A.

	<i>Superin- tendents.</i>	<i>In- spectors.</i>	<i>Ser- geants.</i>	<i>Con- stables.</i>	<i>Totals.</i>
A. Whitehall ..	I	2	14	96	113
B. Westminster ..	I	4	18	145	169
C. St. James ..	I	4	16	167	188
D. Marylebone ..	I	4	18	147	170
E. Holborn ..	I	4	16	147	168
F. Covent Garden	I	4	16	145	166
G. Finsbury ..	I	4	20	210	235
H. Whitechapel ..	I	4	18	168	191
K. Stepney ..	I	6	28	262	297
L. Lambeth ..	I	4	18	168	191
M. Southwark ..	I	4	16	168	189
N. Islington ..	I	4	24	222	251
P. Camberwell ..	I	4	19	195	219
R. Greenwich ..	I	4	20	182	207
S. Hampstead ..	I	4	22	190	217
T. Kensington ..	I	4	20	148	173
V. Wandsworth ..	I	4	20	146	171
Totals. . .	17	68	323	2,906	3,314

London was cut up into divisions, sub-divisions, sections, and beats as now, and each division contained at least one station, some two or more. Eight of the men of a sergeant's party were allotted to beats. The ninth became a divisional reserve man. Thus there were always available sixteen men or so should the occasion suddenly arise for their services.

The uniform was homely, to say the least. "The constable," says one chronicler, "was dressed in a suit of blue cloth, the coat single-breasted with a row of bright white buttons, having a crown with the word 'Police' on them. The collar, worn over a high leather stock, was of the stiff stand-up pattern, with an embroidered loop, bearing the letter and number of the individual in the division. The stock was fastened with a brass buckle, and the unfortunate policeman's head was held as tightly as in a vice, making it impossible to look round without turning the whole body. His trousers were of the peg-top fashion, and his boots a pair of 'half Wellingtons,' clumsily made. The hat was a tall chimney-pot, of great weight, with a shining glazed leather top, having a leather support down each side. A constable carried a rattle, and was

armed with a staff or baton, marked 'Police Office,' and not, as a caricature of the period represented him, with a short Roman sword, and in a black belt a pair of pistols.

"In summer the costume was a swallow-tailed blue coat, with bright metal buttons, white duck trousers, and white Berlin gloves."

TABLE B.

	<i>Superin- tendents.</i>	<i>In- spectors.</i>	<i>Ser- geants.</i>	<i>Con- stables.</i>	<i>Totals.</i>
Commissioner's Office	9	83	255	184	531
A. Whitehall ..	1	32	82	656	771
B. Chelsea ..	1	23	88	703	815
C. St. James ..	1	20	62	442	525
D. Marylebone ..	1	24	62	502	589
E. Holborn ..	1	23	77	541	642
F. Paddington ..	1	20	79	595	695
G. Finsbury ..	1	24	67	580	672
H. Whitechapel ..	1	29	68	571	669
J. Hackney ..	1	23	132	798	954
K. Bow ..	1	29	174	1,053	1,257
L. Lambeth ..	1	26	91	631	749
M. Southwark ..	1	32	105	782	920
N. Islington ..	1	30	160	991	1,182
P. Camberwell ..	1	21	140	758	920
R. Greenwich ..	1	23	151	763	938
S. Hampstead ..	1	25	170	840	1,036
T. Hammersmith	1	22	142	741	906
V. Wandsworth ..	1	23	130	666	820
W. Brixton ..	1	24	135	800	960
X. Kilburn ..	1	27	175	838	1,041
Y. Highgate ..	1	25	174	885	1,085
Z. Croydon ..	1	12	85	418	516
Thames ..	1	9	49	143	202
Woolwich ..	—	4	20	92	116
Portsmouth ..	1	10	30	170	211
Devonport ..	1	5	32	158	196
Chatham ..	1	6	31	126	164
Pembroke ..	—	1	6	27	34
Rosyth ..	—	3	14	71	88
Not apportioned to Divisions	—	5	13	138	156
Totals.. ..	35	663	2,999	16,663	20,360

This is the uniform of which James Grant wrote: "The form of their clothes is well adapted to exhibit their persons to the best advantage." Another writer has thrown forth the suggestion that it was the top-hats which saved the Metropolitan Police from disaster. They skilfully avoided all appearance of militarism.

The pay cannot fairly be described as erring on the side of generosity. A constable's wage was 19s. a week, a sergeant's 22s. 6d., while inspectors and superintendents got £100 and £200 per annum respectively.¹⁷ Even the Commissioners received but £800 a year each, which, on the recommendation of the Parliamentary Committee of 1838, was increased to £1,200.

Looking back after the lapse of years we may realise how skilful was the original organisation of the police. There were inevitable defects, of course, but it is surprising how few they were. Many of these have been remedied in the light of experience. In all of its essentials the organisation of the police stands much the same to-day as it did in those early years when it was fighting to justify its existence.

It was formed at a time when political passions ran high, and it was a material on which to focus popular prejudice. The persecution of the police was in a measure incidental to the great upheaval through which the lower and middle classes were passing in the years immediately preceding the Reform Bill of 1832. It was the froth on the top of a deep agitation. Behind the embittered mobs were men of substance—men who used money and brains to foment the spreading bitterness. They feared that the police would be used remorselessly to stamp out the campaign of reform, and they used all means to break up the force.

In the first year of its existence—during 1830—a Royal procession was planned through London. At once the Metropolis was flooded with anonymous placards and circulars. One of the most widely circulated ran:

LIBERTY OR DEATH !

ENGLISHMEN ! BRITONS !! AND HONEST MEN !!!

The time has at length arrived. All London meets on Tuesday. Come armed.

We assure you from ocular demonstration that 6,000 cutlasses have been removed from the Tower for the use of Peel's Bloody Gang.

Remember the cursed Speech from the Throne !! These damned Police are now to be armed. Englishmen, will you put up with this ?

The authorities discreetly decided to abandon the procession rather than risk an outbreak. Elaborate precautions were taken to prevent a riot, and the day passed quietly.

Political associations had sprung up in various parts of the country, and the intention was openly proclaimed of using force to obtain reform. Of these, perhaps, the National Political Union, which had sections ("classes") organised through London, was the most prominent. Secret meetings were held, where fierce language and vitriolic threats were indulged in, and men were urged to arm themselves against Peel's hated myrmidons.

Even with an old-established, smoothly running police machine sprinkled with veterans, such a state of affairs would have needed delicate handling. And the force had its own internal difficulties. In spite of the great care taken in recruiting, the right type of man was not altogether easy to find, for you cannot recruit an army of archangels at 19s. a week. A large number of the men at first engaged were found to be lacking in the qualities necessary to make a good police officer. The Commissioners were invested with powers of summary dismissal without assigning any reason, and they used them ruthlessly. Within the first eight years of the existence of the force the number of dismissals approximated 5,000; and there were, in round figures, nearly 6,000 resignations, a great number of which were not entirely voluntary. Common sense guided the Commissioners in this matter. Incapacity as well as misconduct had to be got rid of.

It was the same in the highest as in the lowest ranks of the service. Of two superintendents who had been compelled to resign Sir Richard Mayne said: "We found the division not in the state that it ought to be, either as to the prevention of crime, the general purpose of police, the good conduct of the men, nor the satisfaction given to the inhabitants, and upon talking with the superintendents upon the daily business of the police, and from such other opportunities as we had of forming a judgment, we came to the conclusion that they were not fit for the situation. . . . Also it has happened with several of the inspectors; we have been obliged to dismiss some, and some we have told, as we did the superintendents, that they must resign."

It was unfortunate that at this time an incident should arise which gave some colour to the wholesale lies that were being circulated about the methods of the new police. With the

clearing away of the old system there had been no substitute for the Bow Street runners. The new force was designed primarily as a preventive rather than a detective police. There were four officers in each division who wore plain clothes in order to catch beggars, but they were restricted to this duty. Now and again some officer would don plain clothes for a bit of detective work on his own account, but anything in the nature of an organised detective department did not exist.

With the seething unrest that was prevalent it was clearly the duty of the police to take steps to learn of any projected violence. To that end superintendents were ordered to have reports made by men in plain clothes of any threatening speeches delivered at the various centres of the National Political Union—a course which has been followed ever since whenever any body has been suspected of incitement to violence. It was the merest measure of precaution.

Among the men detailed for this duty was one named Popay, whose business it was to report the meetings of the Camberwell "fighting class." Popay went far beyond the orders and intentions of his superiors. He joined the class—as a member—and soon became one of its leading spirits. He had assumed a different name, and declared his profession to be that of an artist. None there were at the meetings of the society so bitter against the Government as Popay; none were more virulent in denunciation of the detested police; none more willing to urge fiery enthusiasts to damning action. For some time the *agent provocateur*—one of the very few who have sullied the record of London's police—continued his operations. But exposure came at last.

Passing a police station one day, a member of the society saw a familiar figure sitting at ease with an official-looking book in front of him. Astounded he paused—but there was no mistake. It was the ardent revolutionary, the trusted stalwart, the fiery inciter of rebellion—Popay! Popay resting in the very camp of the enemy! Popay on amicable terms with the police!

The policeman, when tackled, tried to brazen it out. He had merely been called in, he explained, to deal with some police accounts that had got into a muddle. But suspicion was ablaze. In a little his real identity was disclosed, and then the heather was alight.

From all quarters there was blazoned forth this new proof

of the perfidy of the police. It was a chance not to be neglected, and opponents of the force ran the whole gamut of invective, scandal, and exaggeration. The climax was the introduction into the House of Commons of a petition signed by inhabitants of Camberwell. In this they urged their grievance:

"Some of your petitioners," they declared, "have frequently seen those whom they know to be policemen disguised in clothing of various descriptions, sometimes in the garb of guttermen, sometimes in that of tradesmen and artisans, sometimes in sailors' jackets, and sometimes in ploughmen's frocks: that thus feeling themselves living among spies seeking their lives, and sorely feeling the taxes heaped upon them for the maintenance of those spies, they make this appeal to your honourable house. . . ."

Already one Select Committee had been appointed to enquire into the general state of police, and now another was appointed to deal with this question of "spies." Its investigations were finished within a month, and it reported condemning the conduct of Popay, and vindicating the authorities from the charge of having connived at his procedure. But in its report it sounded a note of warning:

"With respect to the occasional employment of policemen in plain clothes, the system as laid down by the heads of the police department affords no just matter of complaint, while confined to detecting breaches of the law, and to preventing breaches of the peace, should these ends appear otherwise unobtainable: at the same time the Committee would strongly urge the most cautious maintenance of those limits, and solemnly deprecate any approach to the employment of spies, in the ordinary acceptance of the term, as a practice most abhorrent to the feelings of the people, and most alien to the spirit of the Constitution."

In August, 1830, the first of that long list of officers who have laid down their lives in devotion to duty was murdered. A constable of the G Division named Long saw three suspicious characters in the Gray's Inn Lane. With a brother constable he followed them, and finally warned them that they were under observation. Instantly two of them seized him, while a third man stabbed him to the heart. One was seized

by the other constable, but the other two made good their escape. The arrested man, one William Sapwell, was tried and duly hanged. It is interesting to record that, spite of the public dislike of the police as a body, a handsome subscription was raised for the benefit of the dead man's wife and children.

CHAPTER VI

ALARUMS AND EXCURSIONS

HARD on the heels of the Popay affair arose a business that threatened to be much more serious. The activities of the National Political Union were again the factor that brought about a crisis.

In May, 1833, this organisation widely advertised a public meeting to be held in Coldbath Fields. In the strained state of public feeling mischief was feared from such a gathering, and Lord Melbourne, then Home Secretary, laid a veto on the meeting.

Instructions were given to the police to take measures to enforce the determination of the Government. Colonel Rowan began preparations to that end. It should be remembered that hitherto there had been no conflict in mass between the people and the new police. One of the oversights in the regulations made by Mayne was the omission of orders for dealing with a disorderly mob. Yet he laid down precise instructions for handling a peaceable crowd.

The police were without experience in the art of quelling riots, and in what followed they had to be guided by circumstances as they arose.

All things considered, Colonel Rowan laid his plans admirably. He could not interfere until the forbidden meeting was actually in progress, for until that moment there would be no actual breaking of the law. The only force sent openly to the ground was a detachment of seventy men of the A Division, with a superintendent in command. But hidden away, under cover in some stables near-by, was a force of four hundred men, ready to reveal themselves at a moment's notice, should the task assigned to their comrades prove too heavy.

Rowan had decided to be present to assume control of the police, and by virtue of his office as a magistrate, to read the Riot Act should it become necessary.

It had been determined with wisdom that too open a display of force would be calculated to provoke hostility. The custom, then established, of having a reserve available, but out of sight, has invariably been followed on similar occasions since.

The meeting opened and speeches began. The police had, with almost excessive caution, waited till that moment, in order that there should be no question that it was the proscribed assembly. Rowan ordered the men of the A Division to carry out their orders, at the same time emphasising the need to be cool and temperate. A portion of the reserve was brought forward in support, and the restive mob proceeded from hoots and groans to active violence. Stones were flung, weapons brandished. More than one constable fell out injured.

A superintendent ordered his men to charge with drawn truncheons. In a little a fierce affray was in progress. A resident in one of the houses overlooking the riot came to a balcony, and proclaiming himself a magistrate, encouraged the crowd in their resistance. This man, one Stallwood, was in fact not a magistrate, but the declaration doubtless added weight to his words, when he said the police were acting illegally in making use of force before the Riot Act had been read.

In the crowd were men with deadly weapons, and ere discipline and control had gained the day the police paid a heavy toll. Scarce an officer escaped unhurt. Three had been stabbed—one officer, named Culley, fatally.

Few of us are capable of nice discretion in the heat of physical combat, and the police of that day had little incentive to be merciful. Inch by inch they drove the mob back, until it was no longer a mob, but sections of humanity flying in all directions. If, at this time, the police had abandoned pursuit, and contented themselves with the resumption of order, all might have been well. But they had got a little out of control, and the battered policemen carried their victory too far. The scattered atoms of the crowd were driven far and wide.

There is a curious similarity to the charges that were then levelled at the police and those that have since, as a matter of course, followed police action in the dispersal of many an angry crowd. A howl of indignation at the brutality and inhumanity that had been displayed immediately went up from many quarters. The police had been drunk. They had clubbed women and children. The fallen had been kicked and ill-treated.

It will show the general unreasoning state of feeling on the matter when it is said that a coroner's jury, summoned to hold an inquest on the murdered constable, Culley, had the consummate insolence to return a verdict of "Justifiable homicide"! Such a grim perversion of the facts was intolerable. Application was made on behalf of the Crown to the High Courts, who, of course, quashed the inquisition.

An enquiry into the matter was inevitable. A Select Committee was appointed in July, 1833, and in six weeks laid its report before the Commons. The enquiry practically vindicated the police of the grosser charges that had been made against them.

That the police came out with a fair margin of credit was not due to any generosity on the part of Lord Melbourne, who made little attempt to shield them from the consequences of carrying out his orders. He sought to shelve all responsibility and all blame on to the Commissioners—a method of "passing the buck" not unknown to Home Secretaries since. Fortunately for them the facts were made sufficiently obvious.

There were sitting simultaneously during 1833 no fewer than three Parliamentary Committees on the Metropolitan Police. With two of them we have already dealt. The third had been appointed in April to hold a general survey of police and crime, and its labours carried it through to the following year.

Many of the magistrates were called before it. Almost unanimously they expressed approval of the new force, although there was criticism in detail. "As individuals we find them temperate, and their conduct good," said one. "There is more security to persons and property than under the old system," said another. "I think it has proved itself a valuable institution for the public service," said a third.

Nevertheless there was something said on the other side. Sir Frederick Roe, the Chief Magistrate, for instance, was fearful that too great a power lay with superintendents and inspectors, that a large number of persons who had been arrested were discharged without being brought before a court. "I think it is a much safer thing," he said significantly, "to have the person who has been taken up drunk, brought before the magistrates than before the constables, where it is possible he may give half a crown or five shillings, and thus get off."

The Commissioners defended the practice of refusing

charges on the grounds of common sense. "If the whole of the charges were taken," declared Mr. Mayne, "the police service could not be carried on, such a strong outcry would be raised. . . . When a police constable is at every point, and parties have an opportunity at the moment of giving persons in charge it becomes . . . a very serious question whether every charge is to be taken. . . . I do not recollect a single instance when a complaint has been made of improper discharge."¹⁸

In their report the Committee made a wide scrutiny of the service. "It was not to be expected," they said, "that a new system of Police, however perfect, could be introduced without many and strong objections from very obvious causes. . . . And, perhaps, it is a matter for surprise that so great a change should have been accomplished without greater opposition than has been experienced.

"Much is due to the judgment which was exercised in the selection of the individuals Colonel Rowan and Mr. Mayne, who were originally appointed, and still continue to fill the arduous offices of Commissioners of Police. On many critical occasions, and in very difficult circumstances, the sound discretion they have exercised, the straightforward, open, and honourable course they have pursued, whenever their conduct has been questioned by the public, calls for the strongest expression of approbation. . . ."

The service was declared to be carried on with the strictest economy, and men picked and controlled with the greatest care and vigilance. Appreciation had been expressed by grand juries, magistrates and others, and rewards amounting in all to £2,000 had been distributed among the force in four years. "The whole system of the Metropolitan Police is one which must generally enhance the difficulty of a successful course of crime or plunder. It appears, indeed, that the more violent offences have already decreased, while the detection of the lighter offences has increased, which is precisely what was to be expected from a good system of preventive police."

It was admitted that individual officers might have been guilty of abuse of authority, but prompt punishment had been visited upon the offenders, and they had been less in number than might have been expected. The Committee exonerated inspectors from the charge of illegitimate use of power in making charges.

"Many persons have assumed," continued the report, "and

that assumption has been countenanced by the report of the Committee of 1822, that a good police could only be attained at the expense of the liberty of the subject, and that it necessarily involved some arbitrary principle opposed to the free constitution of this country. In the words of that report it was 'difficult to reconcile an effective system of Police with that perfect freedom of action and exemption from interference, which are the great privileges and blessings of society in this country. . . .' Looking at the Establishment as a whole it appears to your Committee, that the Metropolitan Police has imposed no restraint, either upon public bodies or individuals, which is not entirely consistent with the fullest practical exercise of every civil privilege, and the most unrestrained intercourse of private society."

A strong contrast was drawn between the old and the new police. Under former conditions, it was pointed out, magistrates and the most experienced officers had considered "flash houses," where the most vicious and desperate characters were openly allowed to assemble, "that they might be more readily secured when an adequate reward was offered," a necessary evil. Now it had been shown that "the association of Police Constables with low and infamous characters as a means of obtaining information, is not a necessary part of a system which has for its object only the prevention and detection of crime."

Indeed, the Metropolitan Police were active. For in 1831 they took into custody about as many people as they do nowa-days—72,824. Of these, 23,787 drunken people were let loose, without being brought before a magistrate, when they became sober. Drunkenness was a thing that might happen to anyone in those days, and was dealt with tolerantly. The magistrates convicted 21,843 summarily, discharged 24,583 and sent 2,955 for trial. Every policeman, it was estimated, took eighteen or twenty people into custody in a year. Nowa-days it is possible for a constable to go for years without making a single arrest.

Swiftly though the Metropolitan Police shaped itself, it took some ten years before it had properly shaken itself down. In that time rough corners were being smoothed off and the loose ends were being tucked in.¹⁹

Within its boundaries it was singularly effective. Outside them it met the difficulty that it had no effective allies. The need of properly organised police forces in the provinces was

becoming urgent. There was an exodus of criminals from London to seek spots where law and order were less rigorously enforced. The proportion of bad characters in London in 1837 was placed as 1 to 89, as against 1 to 45 in Liverpool, 1 to 31 in Bristol, and 1 to 27 in Newcastle.

The Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 was the beginning of the provincial police. It empowered a "Watch Committee," formed from the local governing body, to appoint police officers and make regulations for their management. It is, perhaps, a pity that a wider vision did not prevail, and that steps were not taken to follow up the success of the Metropolitan Force, by the gradual initiation of a national police. The defects of a system that allowed scores of police controls, one would have thought, had been made sufficiently obvious in London. However, Borough Forces and, later, County Forces came into being, and were of a certainty an improvement on things as they had been.

The Metropolitan Police was taken as a model. For years London officers were in constant requisition, either temporarily or permanently, to assist in the development and organisation of the new bodies. They were the only persons who had had any experience, and they ably laid the foundations of many of the best of our provincial forces.

The first of many expeditions which the Metropolitan Police have since made outside their special jurisdiction was to Sevenoaks, in Kent. A number of journeymen paper-makers had refused to pay their poor rates. They drove away, with contumely, the local police who strove to execute distress warrants.

So the London men were sent for. The paper-makers waged vigorous battle with the newcomers, but victory was ultimately with law and order, and several arrests were made.

It was proposed to take one of the local constables to identify the prisoners when they returned. The stalwart defender of the peace turned pale when the suggestion was put to him. He was afraid that he would incur the vengeance of the prisoners and their friends. When the Metropolitan officers persisted, he actually tried to escape, and only the counter-threat of personal violence made by the London men kept him to their purpose.

Long time, in fact, elapsed before the police outside the Metropolis were in any degree generally effective. Particularly this was so in the rural districts, and the lack of uniformity

was a grave defect. Various systems were at work down to 1856, when an Act was passed compelling some measure of standardisation throughout the country. Parochialism has always been the curse of police.

Anyway, London early became *the* national force of England. It was to London that other districts turned whenever riot or disorder that could not be dealt with locally was feared. The practice arose of lending Metropolitan Police to quell disturbances outside London.²⁰

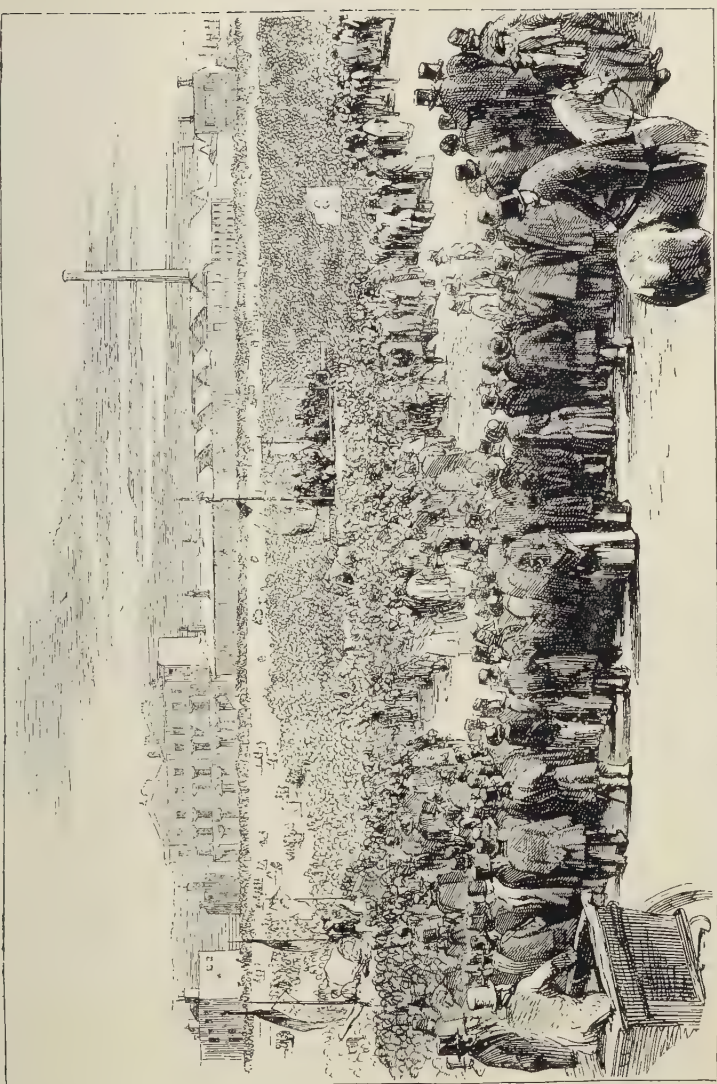
In 1839 the Chartist agitation was in being. Included in the ranks of the Chartists were great numbers of the working population, artisans and mechanics, in the great towns. They sought through political reform an alleviation of social evils and their leaders—the most prominent being an Irishman, one Feargus O'Connor—had drawn up a “People’s Charter” containing six points of reform. It is a matter of history that practically all the reforms they demanded are now in operation. Other people may decide whether the dream put in words by one of their leaders has been realised. “The principle of the Charter means that every working-man in the land has a right to a good coat, a good hat, a good dinner, no more work than will keep him in health, and as much wages as will keep him in plenty.”

It was almost entirely a working men’s agitation, and its leaders were neither willing nor capable of keeping their followers out of mischief. A virulent class hatred was fomented. There was a vague idea in the minds of thousands that the aristocrats and the capitalists were combined to keep the working man from improving his wretched conditions of existence.

The Chartists were to cause much trouble to the Metropolitan Police ere they died out. One of the first collisions occurred in Birmingham, where a “National Convention” was in progress. Ninety London police under Superintendent May had been sent down in fear of violence. The fear was justified.

The police arrived while a meeting was taking place at the Bull Ring. There was much noise, confusion, and loud talk but up to that moment no open act of violence had occurred.

It is possible that the tact and good humour of the modern policeman in dealing with excitable crowds were not so conspicuous in his forbears of that day. The superintendent commanding the police gave a peremptory order to the people



THE CHARTIST MEETING ON KENNINGTON COMMON, 1848.

to disperse. He probably had very little expectation that they would obey, and in fact the order was disregarded.

Almost immediately afterwards the first blows were struck, and the angry mob pressed the police back. There have been few occasions on which, force once resorted to, the Metropolitan Police have been defeated. It is axiomatic that in these cases the police must never be worsted. This, however, was one of those occasions. They were outnumbered and overwhelmed. At a critical moment they received military assistance which saved the situation.

So began the great Birmingham riots, in the course of which £50,000 worth of damage was done. Another collision took place a day or so later. This time the police had the best of matters, but the bitterness and ill-feeling on both sides were strongly intensified.

For some reason, fifty of the police were withdrawn from Birmingham and but forty were left to maintain order in the now thoroughly disturbed town. Public meetings were forbidden, but the Chartists took no notice of prohibition. A few days afterwards the forty police made an attempt to hold up a meeting.

Disaster followed. The task was found beyond their strength. Desperate and infuriated, the mob tore down the iron railings which encircled the Nelson Monument, and using the bars as clubs, drove the tiny body of police back to the shelter of a yard. Imprisoned there, the officers had the chagrin of seeing the main body of the rioters surge into the town ripe for any mischief. For an hour and a half mob law reigned. Beginning with mere wanton damage—the smashing of lamps and windows—the crowd, finding no check upon its operations, began to loot shops and business premises wherever opportunity offered.

Presently the police recovered themselves. Armed with cutlasses, and with mounted troops as allies, they charged once more upon the rioters, and ultimately peace was restored to the town. Following this the Metropolitan Police were withdrawn, and the protection of the town entrusted to a large body of special constables.

It cannot be said that the Metropolitan Police came out of the affair with any great credit. A little tact and tolerance might have gone far to minimise the consequences that occurred. On the other hand must be placed the fact that they were in strange surroundings, dealing with strange people, and faced

with extraordinary difficulties in carrying out their duties. There was in those days little appreciation of the science of managing a crowd. That was to be taught by experience.

The Chartist agitation lingered for many years, but with its progress we have little to do until 1848. That was a year when revolution blazed high on the Continent, and when examples of what maddened mobs could do were patent in the proudest capitals of Europe. Judge, then, of the consternation of the peaceful citizens of London when it was announced that 200,000 Chartists proposed to assemble on Kennington Common and march in military order to the House of Commons, there to present a mammoth petition.

There was apprehension everywhere. This seemed more like an affair of civil war than a matter of police. The Government declared the procession illegal, and warned all peaceable and loyal subjects from countenancing it. The whole of the regular police would be outnumbered by forty to one. An appeal was made for volunteers as special constables, and thousands upon thousands flooded to be sworn in. Among them was Prince Louis Napoleon, afterwards Napoleon III of France, who was then living in London.

No less a person than the Duke of Wellington had charge of the general arrangements for the protection of the Metropolis. The Bank and public buildings were guarded by military.

It was inevitable that if it came to a clash the Metropolitan Police would be the first to be embroiled. London woke to alarm on April 10, the date fixed. Rumours of riot and bloodshed spread to the farthest quarters. Bloody conflicts between police, military, and Chartists had taken place according to report, and always the forces of law and order had been defeated.

As a matter of fact, the great procession was a ludicrous farce. Instead of the formidable array of stalwarts which was to have formed, there gathered at Kennington Common a few thousand men, "not a larger concourse than a temperance demonstration had often drawn together on the same spot."

Only here and there were slight altercations with the police. The great Feargus O'Connor himself counselled obedience to the orders of the authorities. Hackney cabs took the rolls of the monster petition to Parliament, and from that day the great Chartist agitation died out.

CHAPTER VII

DETECTION WITHOUT DETECTIVES

ALTHOUGH there was no detective organisation for many years after the establishment of the Metropolitan Police, the defect was not apparently felt to be serious by Mayne or Cowan. There were competent men under their control, whom they considered capable of dealing with any case that might arise.

Sir Frederick Roe, the Chief Magistrate in 1838, differed. "I never saw a constable who was perfectly competent," he told a Select Committee. Sir Peter Laurie, a City magnate, was positive that the Metropolitan Police could not supersede the runners. They had not the training, nor did he believe that they could acquire it. "These men have been thief catchers all their lives, and know almost every thief in London, and of what he is capable. I will take the two Forresters, for instance, who have been brought up to it from boys. If you take them to a house, and show them that a robbery has been committed, they will tell you directly, by inspection, whether it has been done by an old or by an inexperienced thief." As for the superior officers of the Metropolitan Police, "they are very well out of doors to protect people, and to preserve order, but they cannot detect crime as crime should be detected; if a man's house is robbed, he must go to a man who is accustomed to detect thieves; I think the police are of very great use and I should be sorry to see them done away with; but at the same time, I think it is most important to keep a certain set of men to detect thieves."

Mr. John Clark, the Clerk of Arraignment at the Old Bailey, also insisted: "The prevention of crime merely depends on a man's activity, and upon his keeping his eyes open to see what is going on; but the detection of crime is only to be learnt by considerable experience, and by enquiry in places which nothing but long experience will enable a man to find out;

he must make enquiries at flash houses and public-houses where thieves associate, and among women of the town with whom they live."

Mayne and Rowan retorted to these statements by producing a return of the number of felonies in the Metropolitan Police district during 1837. The total loss they put at £25,854, and they protested that £17,860 of this was due to the carelessness of the people robbed.

The system of "route papers" was much relied upon. Immediately upon a crime becoming known an inspector on duty circulated particulars. On the back of the form other divisions marked the hour of receipt, and passed it on. Thus every officer in the force was acquainted with details of a crime, and the name of the man whose duty it was to solve it. Pawn-brokers were informed and the circumstances published in the *Police Gazette*.

These papers were checked the following day at the head office. "There is likewise, after all this," said Rowan, "a final report made as to the success which has attended the exertions of the parties whose business it was made especially to trace each and all of the 8,000 or 9,000 cases in the paper I hold in my hand, and the constable who has been negligent, if such has been the case, is punished, and he who has been successful, or has exerted himself to the utmost in pursuing the case, is rewarded.

"A fire occurred lately, and immediately afterwards there was cause for suspicion, which came casually to the knowledge of the police of the division where it took place; as to the circumstances of the fire I hold in my hand the reports which were made specially on that occasion to the number of forty, day by day, in tracing out from the remote original suspicion the offence of the party suspected. The result of that has been, that the man is committed for trial, and a true bill has been found against him."

There appear to have been some cross-purposes in this discussion on the art of detection. The Commissioners of Police were speaking of a machine; the others of individual training. No individual thief-taker, however brilliant, could compare with organisation in the detection of crime. The Metropolitan Police had a sort of detective system without detectives; before then there had existed detectives without a system. It was a combination of the two that was really wanted.

Not that the force was utterly without men who had natural detective ability. One officer noticed a handsome carriage standing at a jeweller's shop in New Bond Street. It belonged to a fashionably dressed woman, who as she returned to take her seat was followed by an apologetic shopman. A £20 note that she had presented to pay for goods was forged. He was sorry to trouble the lady, but perhaps she would care to take the note back, and pay the 10s. she had expended in the shop at some other time.

His suspicions aroused, the officer hired a cab to follow the lady to her home. He traced her to a house in Park Lane, and the following day he hung about the neighbourhood. Presently she seated herself in her equipage, and was driven to a jeweller's in Ludgate Hill. Again he followed, entered the shop, and watched her while she purchased 30s. worth of goods, and presented a £20 note in payment. The shopman, a little doubtful of the note, accepted her indignant protestations and changed it. She repeated her operations at a shop in Cheapside, the watchful officer following her, very suspicious, but cautious not to act till proof was beyond all doubt. Once more she paid a visit to a third shop. The policeman waited no longer. He arrested her, and so unmasked a gang of forgers for whom she worked.

There was an element of humour in the case of another inspector "of very gentlemanly appearance," who, nevertheless, failed in his duty. He had obtained conclusive evidence against a woman of uttering forged £5 notes. "Accordingly," said James Grant, "he proceeded, dressed in plain clothes, to her house for the purpose of taking her into custody in the quietest and most delicate manner possible. On calling at her residence, which was in the West End, and had a handsome exterior, he was shown up to the drawing-room, where he stood for a few seconds confounded with the dazzling brilliancy of everything around him. The lady promptly made her appearance, and he was about to intimate to her in the politest way possible the purport of his visit. He was, however, so overpowered by her surpassing beauty and dignified appearance, that he was unable to utter a word; and actually, solely from the impression the lady's beauty and manner made upon him, quitted the place without performing his duty, or even hinting to the lady what the object of his visit had been; but contented himself with getting up the most ingenious pretext he could for having called on her. She did

not even know for some years afterwards that he belonged to the constabulary force."

This singularly susceptible officer would, I imagine, have fared badly had his superiors known of the episode. The fair forger who could thus disarm an officer of the law, even one of such "delicacy," deserves to be rescued from anonymity. But I fear me that no further record remains.

Even after a detective police in some sort had been established the uniformed men were frequently called upon to do duties which would now be regarded as falling to the lot of the detectives.

One of these early cases—it happened in 1845—has interest as showing the uses of quick information and wide publicity.

The subject of the story is one John Tawell, a man who posed as a Quaker, and who, when twenty-five years old, had been transported for forgery. Released on ticket-of-leave in Sydney, he established a chemist's business. Soon he became prosperous, and was looked upon as a well-to-do, well-conducted citizen. One or two successful plunges into speculation achieved for him a fortune. His wife and partner both died under mysterious circumstances, and he returned to England.

He took a house at Berkhamstead in Hertfordshire, and, though the Quakers now refused to recognise him as one of themselves, he wore their dress and professed their tenets. He used money and influence readily in works of charity and education.

In a cottage at Salt Hill, near Windsor, lived a woman named Sarah Hart, who had been a servant at Tawell's house, and in fact his mistress. On the evening of New Year's Day in 1845 a neighbour heard screams coming from Mrs. Hart's cottage. She ran towards it, passing in the garden a man in Quaker dress. To her enquiries he made no intelligible response. He was trembling and confused. The woman ran on into the house.

Mrs. Hart was lying on the floor moaning in agony. Her clothes were torn, and there was every appearance of a violent struggle. She could not speak, and by the time that a doctor arrived she was dead.

There was at first the inevitable confusion attendant on such a murder in a remote country place. But in the course of time a hue-and-cry was raised. Tawell was traced as far as Slough railway station, but it was too late. He had caught a train for London.

Such a start a few years before might have enabled him to avoid justice. But it struck at least one of the pursuers that it might be possible to trap the man. The electric telegraph—a great and mysterious wonder—had lately established communication between Slough and Paddington. The telegraph clerk was urged to wire the facts to the London terminus. He did so.

In these days detectives from the nearest police station would have awaited the arrival of the fugitive. The railway authorities then, however, did not deem it worth while to call in the official police at the moment. Instead, they turned the matter over to one of the sergeants of their own police force, a man named Williams.

Williams seems to have acted with considerable intelligence and discretion. Keeping himself well in the background he watched Tawell alight from the train. The Quaker entered an omnibus. Slipping off his uniform coat, and putting on another, Williams took his place at the back of the omnibus and posed as a conductor, taking sixpence from Tawell as his fare.

Tawell got out at the Bank, and with the officer hard upon his heels went on various peregrinations in the neighbourhood, apparently with the idea of shaking off any possible pursuit. It says something for the skill of the officer in the difficult art of shadowing that he stuck doggedly to his quarry without arousing any suspicion. One of Tawell's halts was at a place called the Jerusalem Coffee House. At last he was tracked down to a lodging-house in Scott's Yard, off the Borough.

Satisfied that he had now found his retreat, the officer left him to call in the aid of the official police. It was not till the next morning, however, when fuller details arrived from Slough, that any further steps were taken. No detective was put on the business. An inspector of the uniformed branch, named Wiggins, took the matter in hand.

Williams and he went to Scott's Yard. But Tawell had gone. The officers, casting about for a scent, went to the Jerusalem Coffee House and there found their man. Wearing an overcoat over his uniform Wiggins accosted the suspect. "I believe you were down at Slough yesterday," he said.

Tawell shook his head. He frankly admitted his name, but protested entire ignorance of the crime. "They must be mistaken in the identity, my station in society places me beyond suspicion," he asserted.

The inspector, however, was not to be bluffed. He took his man back to Salt Hill and handed him over to the local authorities.

Once in custody, Tawell became more communicative. He admitted that he had known the dead woman, that she had been a servant in his house. After she had left she had badgered him with letters demanding money on threat of exposure. "She was a bad woman—a very bad woman," he declared.

Of his visit to Salt Hill, he said that by the wish of Mrs. Hart he had sent out for some porter. When a glass had been poured out for her, she brought out a phial, and crying, "I will do it, I will," added a little of the contents to the liquid in the tumbler, and drank the mixture. Then she lay down on the rug, and he walked out.

A post-mortem examination was held, and scientific tests established beyond all doubt the presence of a very large quantity of prussic acid in the body. If Tawell's story were true the woman had committed suicide. But there were few people who believed his version.

Again and again it has been found in the case of crimes that have attracted public attention that wide publicity has brought forward important evidence for or against the prisoner. It was so in this instance. A chemist carrying on business in Bishopsgate Street came forward and told how Tawell, on the very day of the murder, had bought a quantity of prussic acid, which he had carried away in a properly labelled poison phial.

The trial took place at the Norfolk Assizes, and one point made by Sir Fitzroy Kelly (afterwards Chief Baron Kelly) brought down upon him a flood of ridicule, and a nickname which the junior bar attached to him for many years—Apple-pip Kelly. He accepted and enlarged upon a suggestion made by one of the scientific witnesses that an odour noticed by the doctors conducting the post-mortem examination might have been caused by apple-pips found in the stomach. The theory hinted at was that the minute quantity of prussic acid which exists in apple-pips might have caused her death.

Tawell was found guilty, and before he was executed left a full confession. His main motive in the murder had been to prevent all possibility of exposure to his wife and the Society of Friends.

CHAPTER VIII

EARLY POLICE IN THE WEST END

No proper estimate of police work of any period is possible without taking into consideration a wide range of facts. The facilities for carrying out the duties of a preventive police are dependent upon a number of factors outside the force itself—legislative enactments, public opinion, social custom and outlook, and lastly, the progress of invention. It will be easily understood, for instance, that material difficulties would arise in policing a badly lighted district.

Nor can any exact reliance be placed upon figures. The crimes of one day may be the virtues of another. There was a time when trades unionists were punished by transportation, while cock-fighting, bear-baiting, and other cruelties were regarded as manly sports. Crime, from a statistical point of view, is very much a matter of legislation and vigilance. The more laws there are to break the more will be broken. The more active the police, the more offenders will be discovered, and offenders arrested.

The police force was created in an era of social reform, when men began to understand that causes brought effects. Crime is a matter of temptation, environment, and opportunity. Prison reform alone had its effect. Education had its effect. There were scores of factors that told, in the fight with crime, during the early years of the police. I mention these things lest any should say that too large a claim is made for the police in these pages.

When the police came into being we were beginning to realise that a reasonable certainty of detection was a greater deterrent than punishment, and that the hangman's rope was not absolutely necessary to the salvation of society. The punishment of death was abolished for a large number of offences; the pillory was moribund; street regulations were improved; children were handed over to reformatories rather than herded in gaol with thieves; beggary was being systemati-

cally discouraged; the pillory was entirely abolished; sweeps were prohibited from the employment of climbing boys; public-houses were under a real supervision.

All this reacted on crime, and consequently on police. By 1840, too, they had reached a stage at which most of the obstacles that only experience could overcome had been broken down. The machinery was running with a fair degree of smoothness.

There have been pictures left of that time, by men of keen observation and high intelligence, that have deliberately conveyed the impression that the police were corrupt and apathetic, particularly in the West End of London. Here is one by Serjeant Ballantine apropos of the C Division.

"Regent Street and the surrounding localities were frequented by women carrying on a miserable calling. The Quadrant, especially, was rendered almost impossible for decent people. The shopkeepers were up in arms, and bitter complaints were raised against the negligence of the officers. The inquiries, however, set on foot fully explained the reason of this. The constables upon the beat were in the pay of the most troublesome of those who infested the streets, in consideration for which they allowed them to annoy the passengers with impunity; while those who were quiet and inoffensive had blackmail levied upon them by the most tyrannical and unjust means.

"If they refused to pay they were taken into custody, and had to pass the night in a wretched cell, and were next morning charged with annoying people and obstructing the footway; and although I know that Mr. Knox (the Marlborough Street magistrate), having grave suspicions of the motives of the officers, threw what protection he could over the accused, a fine was often imposed, and further imprisonment followed in consequence of non-payment. The wretched victims learned prudence, and obtained the necessary license to pursue their unhappy trade. I have seen, upon several occasions, a female of the class alluded to place upon a post or window-sill a piece of money and a policeman come up and remove it. . . . I have had many conversations with him (Mr. Knox) on the subject, and I believe he fully shared the opinion I have expressed as to the necessity of great caution in dealing with police testimony."

Serjeant Ballantine was a man of strong prejudices, who never concealed his dislike of the Metropolitan Police, although



A "FLASH KEN."



THE BIRMINGHAM RIOTS.

even he was constrained to admit that they were an improvement on their forerunners.

There can be no question that a shameful condition of affairs existed round about the Haymarket, Regent Street, and other neighbourhoods of the West End during the forties and fifties, and even later.²¹ But these kind of strictures on the police must be received with caution. These accusations are a sort of recurring tradition—I had almost used the word superstition.

The position of the police in regard to prostitution and its attendant evils has always been one of great delicacy and difficulty down to the present day. In any other class of offence for which he has made an arrest, conviction or acquittal of the prisoner affects the officer little as a personal matter. But let a prisoner be acquitted on a charge of prostitution, and a vindictive woman, backed by unscrupulous friends to swear to her respectability, can go far to ruining a police officer's career.

The accusation levelled by Mr. Serjeant Ballantine against the C Division has been many times repeated since. But let me show some more of their difficulties. I will quote a writer who held an unrivalled acquaintance with the underworld of London, and who never hesitated to blame fearlessly where blame was merited—James Greenwood, "the amateur casual."

"The public generally were quite satisfied with the gradual and successful working of the plans adopted for the extinction of the infamous oyster-shops, and cafés, and wine-shops, that in olden time made night hideous from St. James's Street to Piccadilly. Suddenly, however, the good work has received a serious check. According to the usual custom the keeper of a refreshment house on being summoned before the magistrate (Mr. Knox) for an infringement of the Act, was fined for the offence; and nothing else was expected but that the fine would be paid, and except for its salutary effect, there was an end of it. But it would seem that the fined 'night-house' keeper had cunning advisers, who assured him that the conviction was bad, and that he had only to appeal to a superior court to insure its being set aside. The course suggested was adopted and crowned with success. Mr. Knox's decision was reversed, it not being clearly shown that the loose women discovered on the premises were really assembled for immoral purposes."

So ended an attempt to suppress night-houses. The hands

of the police were tied. Three similar cases came before Mr. Knox later. He pointed out certain technical difficulties in the way of getting the law fixed. "There was no help for it; the night-house keepers must go their own way; the police might give up their supervision, and refrain from taking out summonses, as he should certainly decline to convict. He was powerless. Mr. Knox then requested Mr. Superintendent Dunlap to communicate what had occurred to the Commissioners of Police."

It is always easy to confuse and consequently to suspect police motives on any matter. There have been corrupt police officers; there have been stupid officers. Gross blunders have been made, and there has been knavery in the profession of police, as there has been in the law, the Church, the army, the navy, and other professions. Investigation, however, has invariably confuted any allegations of other than individual cases of blackmail or bribery.

That there have been individual cases, and that they were numerous about the middle of the nineteenth century, there cannot be much doubt. The policeman was picked from a class where the standard of education was not high, and his wages were certainly not such as to place him above the temptations that his position offered. It is scarcely to be wondered at that there were men who did succumb.

An innocent individual who finds himself at odds with the police is very liable to see the incident from his own point of view, without making any allowances for the policeman, who may merely be performing a difficult duty. The story quoted below has a familiar ring—in fact, with alteration of minor details it is frequently repeated in the police courts. It is related by Ballantine.

"One night late—it might be early morning—I was in Piccadilly, and attracted by a gathering of people, I came upon a policeman struggling with a drunken, powerful woman. She had either fallen, or had been thrown down, and he had fallen upon her. There were expressions of indignation being uttered by the persons around, and a row seemed imminent. I touched the officer lightly upon the shoulder, saying, 'Why do you not spring your rattle? You will hurt the woman.' He jumped up, and seizing me by the collar said, 'I take you into custody for obstructing me in the execution of my duty.' I remained perfectly passive, and in the meantime another constable had come up and seized the woman, whom he was

handling rather roughly. At this moment Sir Alexander Cockburn, then Attorney-General, who was returning from the House of Commons, appeared upon the scene, and seeing a woman, as he thought, ill-used, remonstrated in indignant language with the officer, upon which the constable who had hold of me stretched out his other arm—whether reaching Sir Alexander or not I could not say—and said, ‘I arrest you also.’ ‘Arrest me!’ exclaimed the astonished Attorney-General; ‘what for?’ ‘Oh,’ said my captor, ‘for many things. You are well known to the police.’ I cannot surmise what would have become of us. Possibly we should have spent the night in company with the very objectionable female on whose behalf we had intervened. Some people, however, fortunately recognised us, and we were released. I took the numbers of the officers, and being determined to see the end of the affair, went next morning to the court where the charge ought to have been made, and heard that the woman had effected her escape, which, considering that I had left her in the charge of half a dozen officers, and she was very drunk, was a remarkable feat of prowess.

“With the concurrence of Sir Alexander Cockburn, I wrote a full account to Mr. Mayne, and after a day or two received an answer from some subordinate treating my letter with great coolness, and saying that if I had any complaint to make I might go before a magistrate. To this communication I replied by private note to the Commissioner to the effect that I should select my own mode of ventilating the matter. A very courteous reply promising thorough enquiry resulted from this further step. I never heard anything more about it, and am sorry to say was not patriotic enough to take any further trouble in the matter.”

Accepting Serjeant Ballantine’s story as it stands—and he was at times somewhat reckless in his statements—it would appear that two distinguished lawyers, one of whom was to become Lord Chief Justice of England, should have known better than to interfere with a harassed policeman struggling with a drunken prisoner. It is perfectly easy for a constable at such a time to misapprehend the motives of an officious stranger.

There is more conviction in a picture of certain police methods in the West End, drawn by Montagu Williams, who was barrister, and later police magistrate, achieved some distinction.

“In the Haymarket,” he says, “was the Piccadilly Saloon.

It had no license whatever. . . . The fun there would commence about 12.30. Someone stood at the outer door, and half-way up the passage was the man who took the entrance money. There was a regular drinking bar on the left-hand side as you entered, and at the end of the room were three musicians. The police were supposed to visit such houses as these at least once every night, and what used to take place—for I have seen it with my own eyes—was simply a farce. A knock was given at the outer door by the visiting inspector, whereupon the word was passed, 'Police.' Some two or three minutes were allowed to elapse, and then the inspector, accompanied by one or two subordinates, entered the building lantern in hand. The interval of time had been sufficient to enable all the bottles and glasses to be whipped off the counter and placed on the saelves underneath, innocent coffee cups being substituted in their stead. Sufficient time had also been given to enable the musicians to vanish through a doorway. . . . Here they remained until the police, having gone through the usual sham of walking round the room, had taken their departure."

Substance there undoubtedly was in some of these stories of the venality of some West End police officers. The recollections of Ballantine and Williams are reinforced by those of Sir Henry Smith, a sometime Commissioner of the City of London Police. "No man stood higher in the estimation of the public as a fearless disciplinarian than Sir Richard Mayne, yet, in his reign, the whole C Division was corrupt to the very core. . . . Every word of what Ballantine and Williams say I can corroborate. Both show good taste in not alluding to '67'—the mystic *soixante-sept*, as we used to call the house—where a constable—whose salary, I imagine, must have exceeded the Home Secretary's—stood nightly at the door.

"Coney's," adds Sir Henry, whose knowledge of the night-houses seems to have been extensive and peculiar, "was the only dangerous establishment in the neighbourhood. Old Count Considine says: 'A cut-glass decanter, well aimed and low, I have seen do effective service.' I never saw such a weapon used at Coney's, but tumblers and soda-water bottles used to be hurled across the room more frequently than was conducive to comfort. Coney originally kept a 'hell' in San Francisco, where he amassed a very considerable sum of money; and his ambition apparently was to conduct his London house on similar lines. When a man was chucked out into the

street the chances were he would lie there till picked up by the milkman in the morning. Provided no one was actually murdered the police, to a man, like the Levite, 'passed by on the other side.'"

As I have said, it is impossible not to believe that there was some foundation for the widespread belief that all was not well with the C Division. It is more than likely that there were men who were tempted and fell. There was never any public inquiry into these matters at the time, and it is hard to say how deeply rooted the scandal was.²² It is simple to blame the police for the scandalous state of the West End, but their anxiety may fairly be said to have been caused by the supineness of other and higher authorities.

An Act passed in 1864 was aimed at some of these haunts which supplied liquor all night long. With this weapon Sir Richard Mayne was enabled to take some action. "It was the Early Closing Act," said the late Chief Detective Inspector Littlechild, "which dealt the death blow to many of these rendezvous, especially to such of them as were licensed; but other dens where liquor was sold . . . were kept in full swing for a while, until certain facts came to the knowledge of Sir Richard Mayne. He determined to cleanse the Augean stable. To this end he advised very rigorous measures to be taken; and the employment of police officers who were utterly unknown to the frequenters of West End places was a matter of urgent necessity, each of the night-houses being guarded by a cordon of touts and spies on sentinel duty. It was not an easy thing to run the gauntlet of all these gentry in order to gain admission, unsuspected, to the premises. Frequently a suitable introduction was necessary, and all manner of stratagems were used by the hawks of the establishments to satisfy themselves that strangers admitted would not be likely to give information to the police."

CHAPTER IX

EAST END WORK

LONDON in the East was no less difficult a problem for police management, though in many ways of a different kind, than London in the West. There were plague spots of crime, where herded together the vilest and the lowest of the criminal fraternity—men, women, and children. The police did their best, but they were only able to lop at the branches of a growth that needed dealing with at the root. Their powers were insufficient.

There were places where, if an officer dared to walk alone, he carried his life in his hand, and where double patrols were the merest precaution.

Such a spot was Ratcliffe Highway,²³ running into the heart of Dockland and its purlieus. Its cosmopolitan inhabitants found their chief prey in sailors, exuberant with liberty, and flush with money after a long voyage. Beershops, dancing saloons, opium dens, lodging-houses, and gambling-houses all drew the pigeons and the hawks. No reputable man or woman could pass through that district except at the hazard of being molested.

Far into the night pandemonium reigned. A street fight in which belts, knives, and bludgeons were used was no uncommon occurrence. From the saloons, where drunken sailors danced with painted sirens, there would come the deep-throated curses of men, the shrill laughter of women, and now and again the sound of a blow or a shriek. There were many ways of dealing with Jack ashore. Some—lucky men—merely had their pockets picked; some were drugged and cast penniless into the streets; some were dealt with in other fashion by the bullies and fighting men who infested the district.

It is no simple matter, even in these times, to collect reliable and certain evidence on the matter of a crime in some districts of the East End. Then the difficulties were tenfold more. There was an *esprit de corps* of rascaldom, and a perfectly

truthful witness—if such was to be found—hesitated before running the risks that would follow examination in the witness box.

Time and again policemen were brutally assaulted. A gang of ruffians who terrorised the district called themselves, with a touch of insolent braggadocio, “The Forty Thieves.” These hotpads, not content with open plunder in their own district by day and night, at times sent out expeditions which held up pedestrians in streets so thickly frequented as the Commercial Road.

As bad, or even worse, was the Borough and its surroundings. Long after the period of which I am writing a correspondent of *The Times* gave a description which fits equally well the early forties:

“Here are to be found not only the lowest description of infamous houses, but the very nests and nurseries of crime. The great mass of the class here is simply incorrigible. Their life is against every man; their life is one continuous conspiracy against the usages of property and the safety of society. They have been suckled, cradled, and hardened in scenes of guilt, intemperance, and profligacy. Here are to be found the lowest of the low class of beershops in London, and probably in the world, and acknowledged haunts of ‘smashers,’ burglars, thieves, and forgers. There is hardly a grade in crime the chief representatives of which may not be met among the populace of the Borough. . . . These haunts are not only the refuge and abiding places of criminals, but they are the training colleges for young thieves. Apart from the crimes which arise, might say almost naturally from passion or poverty, apart also from the relaxation of moral culture caused by the daily exhibition of apparent success in crime, it is known that an organised corruption is carried on by the adult thieves among the lads of London.”

The circumstances of that time were against the police. It was of little effect on the mass of crime to make arrests here and there. The “padding-kens” or “doss-houses,” which were under little or no supervision, were the finishing academies of every kind of profligacy and crime. The police recognised them as a menace, and spoke plainly to the authorities. In the Constabulary Commissioners’ report of 1839 there occurs the following passage:

“The system of lodging-houses for travellers, otherwise trampers, requires to be altogether revised; at present they

are in the practice of lodging all the worst characters unquestioned, and are subject to no other control than an occasional visit of inspection from the parish officers, accompanied by constables, whose powers of interference—if they have a legal right of entry—does not extend to some of the most objectionable points connected with these houses, as they merely take into custody such persons as they find in the commission of some offence. The state in which these houses are found on the occasion of such visits proves how much they require interference. The houses are small, and yet as many as thirty travellers, or even thirty-five, have been found in one house; fifteen have been found sleeping in one room, three or four in a bed—men, women, and children promiscuously; beds have been found occupied in a cellar. It is not necessary to urge the many opportunities of preparing for crime which such a state of things present, or the actual evils arising from such a mode of harbouring crowds of low and vicious persons.”

There were 2,341 such lodging-houses in 1839, and the price charged for a bed was from twopence to fourpence. Here children of the most tender age were introduced to unspeakable forms of vice, and initiated into every sort of crime. The Artful Dodger and his companions were drawn faithfully from life.

A boy of fifteen related how he had left his employment and was lured by an older lad to the life of a pickpocket. He had been sentenced to imprisonment thirteen times.

“Every time I came out harder than I went in. I’ve had four floggings; it was bad enough—a flogging was—while it lasted; but when I came out I soon forgot it. At a week’s end I never thought again about it. . . . I saw Manning and his wife hung. Mrs. Manning was dressed beautifully when she came up. She screeched when Jack Ketch pulled the bolt away. . . . I did four and six at the hanging—two handkerchiefs, and a purse with two shillings in it—the best purse I ever had; but I’ve only done three or four purses. The reason is because I have never been well dressed. If I went near a lady she would say, ‘Tush, tush, you ragged fellow!’ and would shrink away. . . . All the money I got soon went . . . most of it a-gambling. Picking pockets, when one comes to think on it, is the daringest thing a boy can do. It didn’t in the least frighten me to see Manning and Mrs. Manning hanged. I never thought I should come to the gallows, and

never shall—I'm not high-tempered enough for that. The only thing that frightens me when I am in prison is sleeping in a cell by myself—you do in the old Horse and Steel—because I think things may appear. If one's in prison for begging one's laughed at. The others say, 'Begging! Oh, you cadger!' So a boy is partly forced to steal for his character."

The boy had no illusions as to his ultimate fate. Sooner or later, he felt, he was bound to be transported. "If a boy has great luck he may carry on for eight years. Three or four years is the common run, but transportation is what he is sure to come to in the end."

Such was a type of the juvenile criminal, incorrigible, hardened, reckless, but not without a tinge of pathos. There were girls, too, steeped in profligacy for years before they reached womanhood. One may judge what manner of folk were the men and women, the burglars, the beggars, the pawns, the receivers, the sneak-thieves, who made their haunts in these places.

Begging was a fine and profitable art. Men admitted to making 10s. to 12s. a day. Seven men, according to the confession of one of them, made from £8 to £12 a day between them by begging in Regent Street, Bond Street, Piccadilly, Pall Mall, Oxford Street, and the parks and squares. "It was only like a walk out for air, and you received 25s. a man for it. At night we used to go to plays dressed like gentlemen. At first the beaks (magistrates) protected us, but we got found out and the beaks grew rusty."

Whatever their virtues the early police did not wear kid gloves. They performed the rougher part of their work with a certain amount of roughness. Things passed unnoticed that would involve peremptory dismissal, if not worse, nowadays. Witness an episode recorded by the late Chief Inspector Cavanagh as happening in the year 1855, when he joined the force. The scene is a police station in the Borough, and a ruffian had been brought in on suspicion. He was placed in the reserve room while enquiries were being made. The gaoler, a veteran named Tom Tate, who in accordance with the barbarous practice of that time was on duty for twenty-four hours—as, indeed, were the inspectors—started to pass the time by entering the prisoner.

"Well, long 'un, you didn't expect to be here to-night, did yer?"

"No response.

"'You thought you were going to have it all yer own way on the quiet, didn't yer?'

"Not the slightest recognition of the query, but a suppressed mutter.

"'If you'd had a pal or two with yer, you wouldn't 'a been here now, would yer?'

"This remark seemed to arouse the ruffian, for setting his elbows on the table he hissed out, 'I should like to give you a doing, you pot-bellied old scoundrel.'

"Tate, not in the least disconcerted, replied, 'It would take about a dozen of such lath-and-plaster customers as you to do it.'

"The fellow looked furiously at Tate, and said, 'If you'll only that coat off your back, and I had yer outside, I'd kill yer.'

"To my astonishment Tate replied, 'If I take it off, will you try it here?'

"The fellow replied, 'Only give me the chance.'

"Without a moment's hesitation Tate undid his belt and was in the act of unbuttoning his uniform coat, when the villain suddenly jumped up and from behind struck Tom a terrible blow on the side of the head which sent him reeling against the wall. . . . I rushed to the charge room and brought the inspector. By this time Tom had evidently recovered himself, for on the inspector asking, 'What's the matter, Tom?' the latter replied, 'Leave him to me, sir.' The inspector did leave him to the old chap, who in a few minutes had the fellow on the floor crying for mercy. Tate explained all the circumstances, which I verified, and the inspector was satisfied."

The general state of the criminal population with whom the police were brought in contact will be understood by a police return for the year 1837, given on page 71.

Some sidelights on this return are afforded by the comments of contemporary police officers. The greater proportion of thieves, said one inspector, were boys of Irish extraction under twenty years old. Thieves, he pointed out in an interesting *non sequitur*, were not hard drinkers, but tailors and shoemakers were. He thought that it would be decidedly advantageous if, when the police inspected prisoners—apparently for identification as previously convicted persons—the latter were not in prison dress.

TABLE SHOWING THE NUMBER OF DEPREDATORS AND SUSPECTED PERSONS WHO HAVE BEEN BROUGHT WITHIN THE COGNIZANCE OF THE POLICE IN THE YEAR 1837, COMPREHENDING:

- I. Persons who have no visible means of subsistence, and who are believed to live wholly by violation of the law, as by habitual depredation, by fraud, by prostitution, etc.
- II. Persons following some ostensible and legal occupation, but who are known to have committed an offence, and are believed to augment their gains by habitual or occasional violation of the law.
- III. Persons not known to have committed any offences, but known as associates of the above classes, and otherwise deemed to be suspicious characters.

<i>Character and Description of Offenders.</i>	<i>First Class.</i>	<i>Second Class.</i>	<i>Third Class.</i>	<i>Total, All Classes.</i>
Burglars	77	22	8	107
Housebreakers	59	17	34	110
Highway robbers	19	18	11	38
Pickpockets	544	75	154	773
Common thieves	1,667	1,338	652	3,657
Horse stealers	7	4	—	11
Dog stealers	45	48	48	141
Forgers	—	3	—	3
Coiners	25	1	2	28
Utterers of base coin	202	54	61	317
Obtainers of goods by false pretences	33	108	—	141
Persons committing fraud of any other description	23	118	41	182
Receivers of stolen goods	51	158	134	343
Habitual disturbers of the public peace	723	1,866	179	2,768
Vagrants	1,089	186	20	1,295
Begging-letter writers	12	17	21	50
Bearers of begging letters	22	40	24	86
Prostitutes, well-dressed, living in brothels	813	62	20	895
Prostitutes, well-dressed, walking the streets	1,460	79	73	1,612
Prostitutes, low, infesting low neighbourhoods	3,533	147	184	3,864
Classes not before enumerated	40	2	438	470
Totals	10,444	4,353	2 104	16,901

The Superintendent of the B (Westminster) Division considered his district a hot-bed of thieves. They stole from one another. The "cracksmen" who lived in his division generally appeared "as low mechanics. They spend their time drinking, card-playing, and smoking."

Receivers were a difficult problem. The superintendent was positive that certain Jews bought stolen property, but could not detect them in the act. "I think they take premises where communication can be carried on by means of adjoining houses. They generally give about one-third the value of stolen goods, and send goods of value out of the country."

There is almost a modern touch about the lament of this superintendent, confirmed by the Superintendent of the C Division, that the penny theatres were a great mischief. Here is a picture of professional crime of the period:

"The superintendent does not consider thieves to be a drunken set; they enjoy themselves when lucky, but are too cautious to be habitual drunkards. After a successful adventure they alter their clothing, but never drink to excess. Their dress varies according to their luck—a thief can be told if he has been at work by the alteration of his dress; above all by that of the women, their fancy women. They must attend to their women's demands for money to ensure their silence. Their general appearance is seedy, except the swell mob, who dress very well. Thieves do not reside in the C Division, but they come to it by day in order to work. They watch the club houses for purses and handkerchiefs; they also peep in at shop windows where ladies deal to watch if they carry purses in their reticules. They go in gangs of three, two young, and an older one. Their coat cuffs are turned back upon their sleeves. A young man, named Nelson, is the most expert of the class. He is about twenty-three years of age, of excellent address and manners. He has been transported and been many times in prison. The superintendent has heard many persons say that he makes £10 a day, and believes it to be true. The officers at Marlborough Street say that he makes more than any others of the swell mob; he never commits burglaries."

This table, apparently, only applies to persons *at large*, and it is pretty likely to deal in minimum figures, but it gives a comprehensive idea of the professional enemies of the London police in the early years of Queen Victoria's reign. Years of organisation, of education, of social regeneration, of legislation,

were necessary to stamp out the worst features of crime of that day. The police, however capable their administrators, however zealous to uphold law and order, had their limitations. They had neither the power nor the facilities of the police of the present day, and the need of the big safeguard of a trained detective force was a severe defect.

Yet paradoxically, although there were many criminals there were few really serious crimes. During the seven years from 1843 to 1849 burglaries in the Metropolitan Police District averaged eighty-five, and the total annual loss was under £1,300.

The Metropolitan Police were playing an almost lone hand. Outside their borders there was no effective or systematic police vigilance to check the migration of criminals in or out. No police could have stemmed the steady manufacture of criminals. Children who ran loose on the streets inevitably joined the great army of malefactors.

Nor must the influence of a rotten Poor Law Administration be forgotten. While poor folk preferred the risk of the ignominy of prison to the rigours of the workhouse, it was to be expected that there should be a continuous augmentation of the ranks of rogues and thieves.

It is a curious fact that some of the chief allies of the police in certain special directions were societies organised privately, and supported by voluntary contributions from the public at large. The Mendicity Society was energetic in stamping out the plague of beggars. The activity of the officials of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, was an enormous aid in some phases of police work—an aid that is none the less valuable now than it was then.

CHAPTER X

MAYNE'S LAST DAYS

MAYNE and Rowan worked side by side as Commissioners down to 1850. The soldier had seen the force grow to maturity. It had become a tested and proved instrument of law and order. With failing health and the certainty that the work which he had aided to put in progress would not suffer in the hands of his trusted colleague, he resigned, to die two years later. His place was taken by another military man, Captain Hay, who does not appear to have left any mark upon the force, and who died in 1855.²⁴

In the following year Parliament approved an Act which put the force under one Commissioner, with two Assistant Commissioners to aid in the administration. A Captain Labalmondiere appears to have been actually doing the work of an Assistant Commissioner since Rowan died. His position was now legalised, and a Captain Harris, who had been Chief Constable of Hampshire, became the second Assistant Commissioner.

But Mayne had little thought of relinquishing too much to other people. Although the responsibilities of administration had much increased with the growth of the force, he took even the most trivial detail upon his own shoulders. This always risky system answered well while he was in the full tide of his vigour, but with the advance of age his judgment became less clear, and he made some blunders.

Chief Inspector Cavanagh has left a description of him at sixty-three years of age. "He looked nothing like his age. He was about 5 feet 8 inches, spare, but well built, thin face, a very hard compressed mouth, grey hair and whiskers, an eye like that of a hawk, and a slightly limping gait, due, I believe, to rheumatic affection of the hip-joint.

"The amount of work done by the Commissioner was enormous. He was frequently at work from ten in the morning

till late at night, answering most of the letters received, and superintending the most important departments of the office. But what a helper he had in his chief clerk, Mr. Charles Yardley. Both of about the same age, they never tired; and when the staff of 4, Whitehall Place was thoroughly beaten, the two veterans would go home perfectly fresh."

At this time superintendents—who, to tell the truth, were sometimes comparatively illiterate men—had to send practically all the correspondence that they received to headquarters to be dealt with. The extra work that this entailed will be realised. Not till many years after Mayne had died was the procedure simplified by allowing superintendents to deal with all minor matters themselves.

Mayne throughout his career insisted upon the most rigid discipline. The honour of the force was as dear as his personal honour, and he would risk no slur upon it. He was, on the whole, justified, for laxity in those days might well have brought about dire results.

"One Christmas time," says Cavanagh, "he issued an order to the following effect: 'That any man reported for drunkenness at Christmas time would be dismissed.' About sixty men were reported for this offence, and on their appearing before him the morning after Boxing Day, he kept his word and dismissed them all. . . . Some of the poor fellows had twenty years' service. On another occasion he dismissed three inspectors, one of them having a record of some twenty-eight years. These inspectors entered an action against him, and although he won it on a technical point, it tended to shorten his days—he was never the same man after the ordeal he went through in the witness-box."

It is a pity, from some points of view, that Mayne did not retire before age and a lifetime of conscientious work had sapped his vigour and his judgment. The closing months of his life were shadowed by the recollection of a disaster that prompt police measures might have averted.

In December, 1867, a plot was concocted to effect the release of two leaders of Fenianism, Burke and Casey, who were confined in the Clerkenwell House of Detention. Information of the scheme reached the police from different sources. A magistrate received an anonymous letter warning him that while the prisoners were exercising in the prison yard an attempt would be made to blow up the wall of the exercise ground. This he communicated to Scotland Yard. From Secret

Service agents there also came the following warning: "The rescue of Richard Burke from prison in London is contemplated. The plan is to blow up the exercise walls by means of gunpowder; the hour between three and four p.m.; and the signal for 'all right,' a white ball thrown up outside when he is at exercise."

Small importance appears to have been attached by Sir Richard Mayne to these warnings. True, there seems to have been a few extra policemen put on duty in the vicinity. But nothing in the nature of detective supervision or enquiry was put in hand. One of the detectives who had arrested Burke and Casey said afterwards: "I venture to affirm that had the chief officers at Scotland Yard paid due attention to the information given them no explosion could have occurred. There was even in my own possession information which would have rendered all the plans of the conspirators abortive had my superior officers given me a free hand to take such precautionary measures as I deemed necessary."

Sir Robert Anderson, who at the time was in the Secret Service, and was afterwards the head of the Criminal Investigation Department, said: "On December 12, at the hour named, the police on duty outside the prison witnessed a rehearsal of the plot. A cask of gunpowder was conveyed to the place on a truck, and before a light was put to the fuse a white ball was thrown over the wall into the exercise ground as a warning to Burke. He immediately 'fell out' on pretence of having a stone in his shoe, and sought safety in a remote corner of the yard. But the fuse was damp and refused to explode the powder.

"So the whole performance was repeated next day, and again under the watchful eyes of the police. The barrel of powder was rolled to the same spot, and the white ball signal was given as before, and the explosion followed."

Immense damage was done. Not only was the wall blown down, but houses in the vicinity suffered severely. Worse still, four people were killed, and forty, including many children who had been playing in the street, shockingly mutilated. And with it all the crime was futile, for the prison authorities, wiser than the police, had changed the time of exercise.

A police officer chased the man who had fired the fuse, but was knocked down by the explosion. But two men and a woman were caught and ultimately another three. The man who had fired the fuse, one Michael Barrett, was traced to

Glasgow, and brought to London, where, it is of incidental interest to observe, he was the last man to suffer execution in public.

Much comment was made upon the inertia of the police. "Sir Richard Mayne," said Anderson, "freely acknowledged that their conduct was inexcusable, and he was never the same man again. . . . I learned that he had at once placed his resignation in the hands of the Secretary of State, but Mr. Hardy refused to accept it. As Mr. Liddell, the Under-Secretary, put it in his characteristic way, 'We told him he had made a — fool of himself, but we meant to pull him through; we weren't going to throw him over after his long public service.'

"The explanation of this offered by the Secretary of State in Parliament (March 9, 1868) reads more like a Mark Twain story than a Hansard report. It was to the effect that the police were misled by the terms of the warning. It said the wall was to be blown up, whereas in fact it was blown down! Here are Mr. Hardy's words:

"'It appeared that the mode of carrying out the design of which they had received information did not strike those who were set to watch the outside of the prison. . . . What their attention was apparently directed to was the undermining of the wall; they thought it would probably be blown up from underneath, and had no conception that it would be blown down in the way it really was done.'"

Trouble also beset Mayne during the latter part of his career in connection with police handling of mobs, a problem which also affected later Commissioners grievously. Among the most important of these were the Sunday Trading Riots of 1855. These were provoked by a Bill introduced into the House of Commons by Lord Robert Grosvenor to prevent all trading on Sunday within the London area.

There was fierce and semi-organised opposition to the measure. It was denounced as a "tyrannical attack upon the liberty of the people." A demonstration took place in Hyde Park on June 24, "to see how religiously the aristocracy observe the Sabbath, and how careful they are not to work their servants or cattle on that day." A boisterous crowd assembled, but beyond hooting and jeering there was no trouble calling for serious police interference.

During the ensuing week, however, it was announced that 'the open-air concert and monster fete under the patronage

of the Leave-us-alone Club will be repeated " on the following Sunday. Another handbill read:

" SUNDAY BILL.

" Lord Robert Grosvenor says, You are not respectable. He begged to inform the House (of *un*-Commons) that since that movement (the demonstration in Hyde Park) he had received several letters from working men (?), in which they spoke of the persons there assembled in no complimentary language.—Report of Debates, Tuesday, June 26. This is a challenge ! Come therefore in your best clothes next Sunday to Hyde Park, and try to look and behave like your ' betters ' ; bring your wives dressed like columbines, and your sons in round collars and long black sacks. Eat, drink, ride, loll, chat, flirt and be merry, as they do, on Sunday next, for on Monday you must work, and it pleases the Lords that you shall have only this one Sunday more to do it in:

" Sublime decree ! by which, our souls to save,
No Sunday tankards foam, no barbers shave,
And chins unmown, and throats unslaked, display
His Lordship's reverence for the Sabbath day !

The Rolliad.

" Lord Robert Grosvenor wishes to drive us all to church. Let us ' go to church ' with Lord Robert Grosvenor on Sunday next. Go to church ! Lord Robert Grosvenor wishes to drive us all to church ! Let us go to church with Lord Robert Grosvenor next Sunday morning ! We can attend on his Lordship at Park Lane at half-past ten. Go to church with him, then go home to dinner, and be back in time to see ' our friends ' in Hyde Park. Come in your best clothes, as his Lordship is very particular."

There were many other notices couched in somewhat similar terms, and the Commissioner issued an official warning that " no meeting or assemblage of persons in large numbers would be allowed to take place."

Steps were taken to enforce this prohibition, and a large force of police was on duty in Hyde Park on the Sunday. They lay down on the grass and for a while contented themselves with watching the growing crowd as it howled and hooted at those people who were taking the air in carriages in the drive beside the Serpentine.

Missiles were occasionally thrown—bits of hurdles and clods of earth. The crowd pressed on to the drive itself, and the superintendent in charge ordered the police to draw their truncheons and force them back. There appears to have been little tact exercised in carrying out this order, and many people were struck and roughly handled. Other police forced the crowd back on to the bank of the Serpentine. "This movement," reported a Royal Commission, "owing to the crowd and the narrow space, was attended with great alarm and confusion, and some of the people, including well-dressed women, were forced ankle-deep into the water; others were struck with the staves."

The tactics of the police were ill-devised, for, having cleared the space, they made no attempt to maintain it. There were spasmodic rushes here and there, and stones and other missiles began to fly. It was two and a half hours before the main crowd was dispersed, and isolated encounters took place for some time afterwards. Meantime a mob of some hundreds of people had set out for Lord Robert Grosvenor's house in Park Street. They hooted and yelled, but made no attempt at any violence. A score of present-day policemen would probably have good-humouredly dispersed them in half an hour.

But a superintendent appeared, leading fifty police, and peremptorily ordered them away. At that instant he was tripped and fell. Before he could recover himself his men had rushed at the crowd with drawn truncheons. "Though there was no serious resistance some of them, while dispersing and pursuing the crowd, used their staves, and otherwise acted with violence, inflicting severe injuries on several persons who were not shown to have been guilty of any violence, but who refused to move off when requested to do so, or who, being offensively there, ran or stood still when the police came up the street."

At nine o'clock at night order was restored. Forty-nine police were hurt by missiles or by direct assault, and seventy-two people had been arrested and taken to Vine Street Police Station. There these latter were herded together in cells and an underground room which had formerly been a part of the old parish watch-house. It was a warm summer night, and the inconvenience and suffering—not to use stronger words—to which they were exposed were only mitigated in degree by the removal of a number of prisoners to other stations.²⁵ Sir Richard Mayne confirmed the view of the inspector in

charge of the station that the police had no power to take bail in the case of persons charged with riotous conduct.

Strong comment was made upon the police behaviour, and a Royal Commission was appointed to investigate the very numerous complaints. The Commission came to the general conclusion that the superintendent in Hyde Park had lost his head, that certain officers had been guilty of unnecessary violence, and that there had been some mismanagement at Vine Street. The report of the Commission concluded:

“After full enquiry into the complaints submitted to our consideration, we have deemed it our duty to report misconduct on the part of various members of the police; a result the more to be regretted on account of the high character of that body; but if excesses were shown to have been committed by some, ample testimony was also borne to the moderation and forbearance of other members of the same body on the same occasion; and whatever blame may attach to individuals it was through the exertions of the police that accidents were prevented in the park, and property in that vicinity protected from damage. When the events of the day are properly appreciated, we think they will not be found to afford any just ground for lessening the confidence of the public—a confidence founded on the experience of six and twenty years—in the general good conduct and efficiency of the Metropolitan Police.”

Several constables were dismissed as the result of the enquiry, and the Home Secretary instructed legal proceedings to be commenced against three of them. Another result of the report was that the embroidered scroll-work, which was twined around the numbers of police officers on their collars and helmets, was abolished, and plain metal letters and figures substituted.

It was in 1860 that divisions of the Metropolitan Police were formed to take charge of the dockyards in various parts of the country.

There were other riots during Sir Richard Mayne's term of office to which no special reference is demanded till the reform agitation in the sixties. In July, 1866, a monstrous reform meeting was projected in Hyde Park. “The authorities,” said Mr. Justin McCarthy, “took the very unwise course of determining to prohibit it, and a proclamation or official notice was issued to that effect. The Reformers were acting under the advice of Mr. Edmond Beales, president of the

Reform League, a barrister of some standing, and a man of character and considerable ability. Mr. Beales was of opinion that the authorities had no legal power to prevent the meeting; and it need hardly be said that a Commissioner of Police, or even a Home Secretary, is not qualified to make anything legal by simply proclaiming it so. The London Reformers therefore determined to try their right with the authorities. The authorities had posted notices announcing that the gates of the Park would be closed at five o'clock that evening. When the first of the processions arrived at the Park the gates were closed, and a line of policemen was drawn outside. The President of the Reform League, Mr. Beales, and some other prominent Reformers came up in a carriage, alighted, and endeavoured to enter the Park. They were refused admittance. They asked for the authority by which they were refused, and were told it was the authority of the Commissioner of Police. They then quietly re-entered the carriage. It was their intention first to assert their right, and then, being refused, to try it in the regular and legal way. It was no part of their intention to make any disturbance. They seem to have taken every step which they thought necessary to guard against any breach of the peace. It was clearly their interest, as it was no doubt their desire, to have the law on their side. They went to Trafalgar Square, followed by a large crowd, and there a meeting was extemporised. . . .

"Meanwhile, however, a different scene had been going on in Hyde Park. A large and motley crowd had hung about the gates and railings. The crowd was composed partly of genuine Reformers, partly of mere sightseers and curiosity-mongers, partly of mischievous boys, and to no inconsiderable extent of ordinary London roughs. Not a few of all sections, perhaps, were a little disappointed that things had gone so quietly. Many of the younger lookers-on felt aggrieved, exactly as the boys did in the 'Bride of Lammermoor,' when they found that the supposed fire was not to end in any explosion after all, and that the castle had 'gane out like an aill wife's spunk.' The mere mass of people pressed and pressing round the railings would, almost in any case, have somewhat seriously threatened their security and tried their strength. Emerson has said that every revolution, however great, is first of all a thought in the mind of a single man. One disappointed Reformer lingering in Park Lane with his breast against the rails, as the poetic heroine had hers, metaphorically, against

the thorn, became impressed with the idea that the barrier was somewhat frail and shaky. How would it be, he vaguely thought for a moment, if he were to give an impulse and drive the railing in? What, he wondered to himself, would come of that? The temptation was great. He shook the rails; the rails began to give way. Not that alone, but the sudden movement was felt along the line, and into a hundred minds came at once the great revolutionary idea which an instant before had been a thought in the mind of one hitherto unimportant man. A simultaneous impulsive rush, and some yards of railings were down, and men in scores were tumbling and rushing and floundering over them. The example was followed along Park Lane, and in a moment half a mile of iron railing was lying on the grass, and a tumultuous and delighted mob were swarming over the Park. The news ran wildly through the town. Some thought it was a revolt; others were of opinion that it was a revolution. The first day of liberty was proclaimed here—the breaking loose of anarchy was shrieked at there. The mob capered and jumped over the sward for half the night through. Flower-beds and shrubs suffered a good deal, not so much from wanton destruction as from the pure boisterousness which came of an unexpected opportunity for horse-play. There were a good many little encounters with the police; stones were thrown on the one side and truncheons used on the other pretty freely; a detachment of foot-guards was kept on the spot in readiness, but their services were not required. Indeed, the mob good-humouredly cheered the soldiers whenever they caught sight of them. A few heads were broken on both sides, and a few prisoners were made by the police; but there was no revolution, no revolt, no serious riot even, and no intention in the mind of any responsible person that there should be a riot."

Mr. McCarthy's idea that there was "no serious riot" may have been a little tinted by political prepossessions. There were scores of police injured, some for life. Sir Richard Mayne himself was on the spot in control, and received certain hurts. "The poor old fellow, sticking to his post in the most gallant manner, and giving orders right and left, was struck in the face by some cowardly scoundrels by stones thrown at him, the blood streaming down his venerable face."

Yet it is on record that "the police behaved with the most admirable moderation, and not a single case of unnecessary violence was proved against them."

CHAPTER XI

THE ADVENT OF HENDERSON

SIR RICHARD MAYNE died the day following Christmas in 1868. For forty-one years he had guided and controlled the instrument that he had fashioned for the preservation of law and order, and he died in harness. Lesser men have lingered longer in the public memory, yet his monument is wherever a policeman walks in English-speaking countries. The vision of a science of police may not have originated with him, but he was the man who, with unfaltering steadfastness, nursed and brought it into being. The comparatively small points in which he erred weigh as nothing against the work that he did. He was a man whose inflexible honesty, consummate judgment, and unwearying energy deserved greater rewards than he obtained. He had the qualities of a great man. To-day he is practically forgotten.

The police of London practically trebled itself under his command—from 3,314 to 8,963—and the district for which they were responsible had swollen to 688 square miles, practically the same area as to-day. The dockyards had been policed with the men he had trained.

A detective system had been established. Habitual criminals had come under police supervision. Public carriages had been put under control of the police. Common lodging-houses were under systematic inspection. Transportation had been abolished. A sane prison system had begun to shape itself. There were reformatories and industrial schools for juvenile criminals. Principles—on which possibly much had yet to be built—for the prevention, detection, and punishment of crime, and the reformation of the criminal, had been established. "Year by year," said a veteran police official, who had spent most of his service under Mayne, "and step by step, the good old times for the idle, the lazy, and all who trusted to their wits and their chicanery for a living, have slowly but surely passed away."

Luke Owen Pike, in his "History of Crime in England," published in the seventies, says:

"It is sometimes only too evident that the testimony of a police constable is still given in the interest of himself and the body to which he belongs rather than with a strict regard to truth. There have certainly been instances in which an accused person has been punished, not because he was guilty, but because his captors swore hard against him. Understandings with the keepers of night-houses and their frequenters have been suspected even since the time when Sir Robert Peel's Act came into operation; and it is still a part of the business of detectives to know where thieves are gathered together. But all these facts combined do not imply the depravity which was found to exist just before the Metropolitan Police was established. There may now and again be false swearing against the innocent by some policemen who consider their first duty to be towards their comrades, and yet the general conduct of the whole force may be good and serviceable to the State. There may be some policemen receiving the sum of twenty-five shillings per week who are not absolutely incorruptible, and yet criminals may be brought to justice without the aid of bribes. The detectives may all know, as in former days, where their prey is commonly to be found, and yet may not be thieves themselves, or on terms of intimate friendship with thieves. The progress of centralisation, especially in the Metropolis, acts as a most powerful check upon a constable tempted to do wrong. Both he and the division to which he belongs may be removed by the central authority to some quarter of the town in which he is a stranger. If he attempts to persuade his fellows that they ought to make oath in his support, regardless of facts, he may succeed in some instances through the influence of a mistaken notion that union in such cases is strength; but in all likelihood he will oftener fail through the general knowledge that discredit brought on a number of individuals affects the special class to which they belong, and that the authorities are quite aware of the fact, and that transgression will very probably be followed by dismissal and punishment.

"The sense of security which, in spite of the fluctuations of crime, and in spite of temporary panics, we really enjoy, we certainly owe in some degree to that system of police with which many find fault, but which few, except the habitual criminals, would wish to see abolished. But many causes which, like the police force itself, are the products of advancing

civilisation, contribute directly as well as indirectly towards the same result. Modern improvements in the mode of lighting towns and their suburbs . . . must be reckoned among the most effectual preventives of robbery by night. Telegraphs aid not a little in the detection of offenders after a crime has been committed, and photography has often done most important service in proving the identity of a criminal."

The death of Mayne put the Government in some difficulty, for he was not a man easily replaced. General expectation in the police itself was that he would be followed by the Assistant Commissioner, Captain Labalmondiere, who was a capable disciplinarian and had a very complete knowledge of the force, or by one of the Metropolitan magistrates. Sir Henry Smith asserts that Mr. (afterwards Sir) James Fraser, the Chief Constable of Berkshire, was actually appointed by the Home Secretary. "Fraser made such a name for himself in the county that, on the death of Sir Richard Mayne, Sir George Grey sent for him and appointed him to the Commissionership of the Metropolitan Police. Fraser returned to Berkshire to receive the congratulations of every magistrate in the county, and was preparing to leave for Scotland Yard when he received a letter from the Home Office intimating that Colonel Henderson—afterwards Sir Edmund—had been very highly recommended, and that Sir George Grey had decided on appointing him to the vacancy. A straighter man, or one less likely to break his word, than Sir George Grey it would have been then difficult to find. On this particular occasion the less said about his conduct the better. Fraser felt his treatment very much, but within a few months was successful in gaining the City appointment, which, from some points of view, may be regarded as a more desirable one."

Both inside and outside the police the appointment of Colonel Henderson created some perturbation. The old suspicion of "militarism" was aroused. In fact there proved to be little of the military spirit about Henderson. He had been head of the Convict Department, where he had carried out many reforms, and he speedily showed that he intended to know his job. A self-possessed, equable man, of great common sense and tact, he quietly settled down to win the confidence of his men and the public. Without fuss and without nagging he succeeded. No less competent a judge than Sir William Harcourt said of him that while he held the reins "things went very smoothly both inside and outside Scotland Yard, although he

had to deal with very troubled times. Although a military man, Colonel Henderson did not govern the police in a military spirit. Sir E. Henderson followed Sir R. Mayne, and both were admirable Commissioners. It was said that the former was not sufficiently vigorous and active, but there were other merits than vigour and activity. Sir E. Henderson was calm and self-possessed; he was not fussy and fidgety, and he thoroughly understood and had great reliance upon the general disposition to order and good behaviour on the part of the population."

Sir Robert Anderson held that Henderson "never took to the details of police work, and least of all to thief-catching." The reader shall judge.

Mayne, as his years advanced, had been a little inclined to conservatism in his administration. Other Commissioners, not excluding Henderson, fell into the same error in the later stages of their official life. He was blind to certain things that a younger man would have perceived. Henderson was not prepared to accept the police force, as he found it, as perfect. Although "no thief-taker," he first turned his attention to the detective department. There were fifteen detectives for the whole of London. He increased the number to two hundred. The Criminal Investigation Department was created in the later years of his Commissionership. Instead of trying to carry the force on his shoulders, as in many details Mayne had, he created a new post—that of district superintendent. There were four district superintendents, each in charge of a quarter of the force, and the rank was equivalent to that of Chief Constable, to which title it was afterwards changed. One of these, it is interesting to observe, was an officer named Walker, who had passed through every grade of the service.

He established fixed points by which a constable might always be found at a particular spot, and pointed out that the police was so undermanned that in some cases beats of fifteen miles were given to one control. He asked for an addition of nine hundred men. He organised the Lost Property Office so that there was an effective means of recovering articles left in cabs. He extended the police-telegraph system. He instituted the system by which an inspector was always on duty at a police court to make note of any comment on police action made by magistrates. Obsolete police stations were replaced by modern buildings. He found the Reserve not an attraction to the men, and reorganised it to an average strength of 10 per cent. of a division, restricting it to picked men, who were to be

given extra pay and to perform ordinary police duty until called upon for duty at public assemblages.

Nor did he overlook the personal comfort and well-being of the men. Recreation rooms were established in police stations wherein men off duty were allowed to smoke and amuse themselves with billiards and other games. The old top-hats and Wellington boots had disappeared in 1858, but he made certain changes in the uniform which were appreciated. Men off duty were given permission to wear plain clothes. He established the Metropolitan and City Police Orphanage. Constables were allowed to wear beards or moustaches if they wished—before that they could only wear side-whiskers or be clean-shaven. He found a number of the men very illiterate, and appointed schoolmaster sergeant in each division. In his first report he said:

“ I think the sergeants and constables of the Metropolitan Police Force have a reasonable claim to some increase of pay. The present rates are less than those granted to the City Police and to the officers of the convict service, and it is difficult to obtain and keep the services of valuable men at the existing rates. The pay of the sergeants is obviously and confessedly too low. A constable on promotion to the rank of sergeant only receives an addition of one shilling a week to his pay, while his duties are much more arduous and his responsibilities much greater. The consequence is that many men who might become valuable police-officers will not qualify themselves for the educational test necessary for their promotion, while the constables, specially the married men, find it hard to keep out of debt at the present rate of living in the Metropolis. It is needless to point out the bad effects thus produced in the efficiency of the force.”

The rates of pay he proposed cannot be considered exorbitant. Constables were to receive an extra shilling a week, making their pay from 20s. to 26s. a week; while sergeants were to get an extra three shillings, making their pay run from 29s. to 31s.

On the other hand, he deprecated an experiment which forty years later was to cause some agitation in the force. “ The experiment of granting weekly leave has been a disappointment to all who watched its effects. It has not increased the alertness or efficiency of the police. In the superior ranks absent officers are replaced by section sergeants often more or less incapable and inexperienced; these, again, are lost to their own sections, and replaced by acting sergeants—*i.e.*, constables; important duties are badly performed, and constant complaints from

the public are the result, while the constable becomes unhinged and unsettled by constant interruption of duty. The fallacy is that one day's leave is one day's rest. It would be well, if it were possible, to give the whole force leave on the Sabbath, but in the nature of things this is impossible, and there can be no doubt that the existing system of weekly leave is a mistake. . . . There is but one opinion on the subject among those in authority in the police; and after giving the subject the careful consideration it deserves, I beg to recommend that the leave granted to the Metropolitan Police be for the future two days in the month, one of which to be invariably on a Sunday."

¶ A policeman certainly earned his pay in those days. He was on duty from eleven to twelve hours, mostly at night, of which at least eight hours was spent on the beat. The single men were lodged in section houses, which, though much improved by Henderson, were far from palaces. A rent of one shilling a week was charged. A man who was accommodated in one of these at Islington in 1882 wrote: "The section houses in those days were rough to live in. The mess-room underground, forms to sit on, bedrooms to hold about twelve men, bare walls and floors, no furniture other than the bedsteads, and no canteen. . . . But the Section House had its advantages as well as its disadvantages. There were always a good fire and plenty of hot water, a special room to dry wet clothing, and a mess which provided a good dinner, to be paid for at each week-end, a constable being selected to act as caterer. A policeman falling ill had to remain in his cot, and was nursed by another officer struck off duty for the purpose."

At any emergency the men in the section house would be called out. A constable would be having a rough time in one of the slums. The off-duty men, without waiting to put on uniform, would seize anything available, such as walking-sticks, mops, etc., and after a few lively minutes secure their prisoner. If he was a terror to the neighbourhood and was violent, he would be given what was known as the "frog's march," which was carried out by turning the prisoner face downwards, and then carrying him by four policemen, two holding his legs, and two holding his arms."

The "frog's march" was prohibited after a soldier had been choked by his tight collar when arrested by some military police. Ambulances were first used by the police about 1884, but it was many years before all stations became equipped with them. That the police of that time in general used rough methods in dealing with rough customers cannot be doubted.

Neither discipline, training, nor education were of the standard of to-day. Nor were they without a certain amount of provocation. In the four years 1869 to 1872 there were 15,933 assaults on police officers, so that, as Henderson drily remarked, every policeman was assaulted about once in every two years.

The meagre pay was productive of many evils. Constables unable to afford warm underclothing for the winter months were reduced to the shift of tying brown paper round themselves. Although "tips" were strictly prohibited, money, eatables, and particularly drink, were accepted from the public by the majority of men. Drunkenness was a common offence, and was frequently met by a nominal fine of five shillings, although Henderson realised the evil and tightened up the penalties. In 1870, while expressing his belief in the force, he declared his intention of "weeding it of all unworthy members." Men guilty of gross assault or drunkenness were charged before a magistrate. In 1872 "ten men were charged with drunkenness on duty, and twelve with unlawful absence, which usually arises from the same cause, and, being convicted, were dismissed from the service."

That there should be no confusion as to the duties of the force Henderson had all the police orders issued since 1829 codified and indexed. An Instruction Book was issued to be supplied to every man in the police, and a summary of this that could be easily carried in the pocket, and is now known as "Duty Hints," was prepared.

In 1870 there was begun a charity of which members of both London forces have a right to be proud—the Metropolitan and City Police Orphanage. On a beautiful and convenient site at Strawberry Hill this institution was placed "to afford relief to as many of the destitute orphans of the members of the Metropolitan and City of London Police Forces as the funds will permit, to provide them with clothing, maintenance, and education, and to place them out in situations, where there is a prospect of an honest livelihood being secured."

Between 250 and 300 children are brought up here, and it is maintained by a contribution from the Police Fund, by subscriptions by the police, and funds raised by police entertainments. The Police Minstrels, of which Sir James Olive was the moving spirit, have, for instance, raised a quarter of a million of money for the Orphanage in the last fifty years. The management of the institution is in the hands of a Board of police officials.

At the rear of the Orphanage is a golf course. As a matter of incidental interest it may be mentioned that this was acquired

by the Orphanage in 1926, primarily to prevent it being built upon, but with the intention of placing it at the disposal of those members of the force—there are many—who take an interest in the Royal and ancient game.

The accommodation at the old stations prior to Henderson's advent had been somewhat primitive. Private houses were not infrequently converted into police stations, with the result that police were put to great inconvenience in carrying out their duties, and the cells for the reception of prisoners were appalling, damp, vermin-infested, ill-lighted dungeons. One officer who acted as gaoler round about this time wrote:

"In one cell about twelve feet by six I had to put a dozen women, and in another of the same size an equal number of men. A thief or burglar was put in the same cell as a gentleman who had taken a drop too much, or a respectable woman flung in with a flaunting prostitute of the very lowest type. The ventilation consisted of a small grating near the ceiling and an opening in the door, six inches by ten, through which a small can of water could be passed. Nothing more disgusting, nothing more revolting could possibly be imagined. There was only one bench in each cell, and upon this on such an occasion only room for about half a dozen to sit. The remainder had to stand or lie on the asphalt floor."

There were occasions when prisoners had to spend two days and a night in these dens, and were sustained on nothing but coffee and bread-and-butter during that time. With altered times came cells lined with glazed brick, reasonably warmed, and properly ventilated, and kept scrupulously clean.

Nearly a hundred years after it had been suggested by Colquhoun, the post of Director of Public Prosecutions was created, with a natural reaction on police matters. This was in 1879. In 1884 the office was merged in that of the Solicitor to the Treasury. Another Act in 1908 resuscitated the post, which has since then been occupied by barristers of distinction acting nominally under the supervision of the Attorney-General. Although apart from the police, he is of necessity often concerned with their activities. Indeed, it is specifically laid down that he may give advice to officers of police. He has very large powers in the institution of criminal proceedings.

A legal adviser to the police was also appointed during Henderson's term of office. "His opinion," observed Sir Howard Vincent, "was rarely of value because he had not got the responsibility before the courts of supporting that opinion."

CHAPTER XII

THE FIRST POLICE STRIKE

THE first of several occasions on which the Metropolitan Police have given open and organised expression of discontent took place in 1872. The men were dissatisfied with the rates of pay then existing, and open agitation, culminating in largely attended meetings, resulted. There were various ways of dealing with this. The Commissioner decided to negotiate with the men, and, after protracted discussions during October and November, an increase of pay amounting roughly to 20 per cent. was granted.

If the matter had ended here all would have been well. But by some authority it was thought well to mark displeasure by the transfer of the secretary of the delegation from a town division to Brockley in Kent. He refused to obey the order, and was immediately dismissed the force. Indignant at what they thought was victimisation, some scores of men refused to go on duty one night. As a result 179 men were suspended, and sixty-nine of them ultimately dismissed. The majority of these were reinstated, according to Sir Edmund Henderson, "on expressing their hearty regret for a grave dereliction of duty into which they were unwarrantably misled. Of this occurrence, which was much commented on at the time, it is sufficient to say that it was repented of almost as soon as committed, has been amply atoned for, and has left nothing behind it but a regret that by the unjustifiable conduct of a few men, a stain should have been left on the honourable annals of the force."

Before turning to one of the most unfortunate episodes of police administration in London, reference may be made to the severance of the last link that bound modern constables to the old "Charlies"—the abolition of the rattle. The rattle was carried in a coat-tail pocket, and was not supposed to be used to summon assistance except under extreme and urgent necessity. It served another, and quite unofficial purpose, as

being handier as a weapon of defence or offence, being more accessible than the truncheon. Several thousand whistles were, however, issued to take its place in 1884, though officers on night duty for two or three years afterwards continued to carry their rattles. There was one somewhat quaint general order in existence during the seventies which directed that in any sudden or special emergency calling for the summoning of police from their beats the officer in charge of a station was to have a rattle continuously sprung at the station door till all were assembled.

From the time that Henderson took charge of the police down to 1886—a period of seventeen years—London had been singularly free from serious riots calling for police action. Henderson's experience of this sort of thing was therefore limited. Seventeen years is a long time. There were few police officers of any grade in the force who knew much more about it than he did, and even the veterans were somewhat rusty.

So that when in February, 1886, a body of men calling themselves the London United Workmen's Committee decided to hold a meeting in Trafalgar Square, no serious trouble was apprehended. These men dissociated themselves from the Social Democratic Federation. The Socialists disputed their right to call themselves representatives of the workmen. The former body represented to Scotland Yard that there was some danger of their meeting being interfered with, and besought police help. Other warnings reached Scotland Yard, and it was thought well on the day of the meeting to have a large force ready for contingencies. There were but sixty-six men in Trafalgar Square itself, but under cover in the vicinity there were 563 police as a reserve. Two days before, a District Superintendent, Mr. Robert Walker, an old man of seventy-four, with nearly fifty years' service, was informed of these arrangements, and that he would be in command.

He went to Trafalgar Square. The working men held their meeting, and a rival meeting was held by the Social Democratic Federation. A part of the Square was densely crowded, and police were sent from the reserve to keep the traffic ways open. There were a large number of roughs in the gathering, and once or twice the police had to charge the mob to break it up. Mr. Walker, attired in tall hat and civilian clothes, seems to have got early jammed in the densest part of the crowd, and to have had his pockets picked. Apart from this the worst

that happened in the Square was the demolition of one of the speakers' platforms. Let Mr. Walker speak for himself:

"After the speaker's bench came down, a great crush followed, and which I happened to get into; my coat was unbuttoned and both my trousers pockets had hands in them. One was utterly powerless to act for oneself, every man around being probably a thief, and this was their harvest; but fortunately I had taken care to add but little to their gains. A string of police stood round the base of the Nelson Column to keep off sightseers, but though they were within from ten to fifteen paces of this awful crush they could not have rendered help."

At the conclusion of the meetings a body of the crowd some three to five thousand strong poured swiftly westwards out of the Square. The police were taken by surprise. All their arrangements had been based on the assumption that the crowds would return by the way they had come. A series of bunglings, misunderstandings, and lack of co-operation followed. The hundreds of police were all in wrong places.

Down Pall Mall the mob rushed brandishing red flags and throwing stones. They halted outside the Carlton Club and broke the windows. A solitary policeman at the War Office could have done nothing to bar their way even if he had willed. Along St. James's Street they broke windows and looted shops undisturbed. So they made their way to Hyde Park, where speeches were delivered from the base of the Achilles statue. An abortive prosecution was afterwards launched against the authors of some of these harangues.

But the mob was more inclined for action than for speeches. Who was to stop them? Out of the Park they made their way to North and South Audley Streets, where they wreaked their will on the shops. Not content with looting they did such damage as their fancy suggested. One dealer's goods were thrown through the plate-glass windows of his neighbour's shop. In Oxford Street a jeweller's shop was attacked, and one of the sons of the proprietor thrown bodily through the window. For an hour this gang of roughs held undisputed possession of some of the richest thoroughfares of the richest city in the world, while within a mile there were enough police with the capacity and nerve to deal with them in five minutes.

They had left Trafalgar Square at about four o'clock. At five they received their first check, and this through the energy of an inspector acting entirely upon his own initiative, without

either information or instruction from Scotland Yard. This man, Inspector Cuthbert, was at Marylebone Lane Police Station, when an excited passer-by rushed in to warn him of the approach of the mob. Fifteen men and a sergeant were opportunely parading for duty. Without a second's loss of time he gathered his men together, took them at the double to Oxford Street, and without hesitation charged the rioters, truncheon in hand. Seventeen resolute men against thousands showed what discipline could do. The mob gave way in panic. Three arrests were made, and the handful of men in blue pursued as far as Regent Circus. The riot was over. It had taken as nearly as possible eight minutes to suppress it. If the high officials of police had failed that day, the men of the ranks had shown what they could do if properly led.

But things were bad enough. The public had lost confidence in the police, and the succeeding days were full of alarms and excursions. All of this happened on a Monday. On the Tuesday there was another meeting in Trafalgar Square, which was dispersed without difficulty. On Wednesday a dense black fog enveloped the town, and rumour was busy to the effect that tens of thousands of desperate men were gathering intent on loot. The nightly guard of the Bank of England was retained during the day; West End shopkeepers shut up their shops and barricaded their windows. London waited in suspense.

To add to the general alarm the police sent out notices urging the inhabitants to take precautions for their own safety. This was the limit of ineptitude. It gave a sort of official sanction to the general feeling of insecurity. When nothing happened and people regained their balance, a wave of indignation against the police swept the town.

A sum of £7,600 was paid for the damage done by the mob, and indignation meetings were held to protest against the inefficiency of the police.

Within a few days the then Home Secretary, Mr. Hugh Childers, who had just taken office, appointed a committee to enquire into the conduct of the police, and himself presided. It issued a very drastic report:

"In our opinion, the police arrangements for the meeting were most unsatisfactory, and very defective in their conception. . . . The instructions issued by the Chief Commissioner were too meagre in character, and did not provide for the contingencies which we think the police ought to have

foreseen. . . . The evidence taken before us shows that Mr. Walker practically exercised no control whatever over the police arrangements, and was not in a position to exercise any. . . . There would appear to be a defective chain of responsibility in the force, and the distribution of duties and responsibilities among the superior officers leaves much to be desired. There seems to be no established system, and no recognised regulations for coping with great meetings. It is, in our opinion, a matter of grave consideration, whether the number of officers of superior rank and education, or of experience in the habit of command, is sufficient for the numerous duties of an important nature which from time to time devolve upon the police when collected in large numbers. There seems to be a want of initiative on the part of superintendents and inspectors."

As chairman of the committee Mr. Childers reported thus to himself as Home Secretary. As Home Secretary he promised another committee to enquire into "the administration and organisation of the Metropolitan Police Force with a view to making such changes in the organisation and administration of the Force in all its branches as may be necessary to remedy any defects."

There was only one thing for Sir Edmund Henderson to do. He resigned, and at the same time Mr. Walker decided to retire from the Yard.

"You are coming to a funny place," said Frederick Williamson to Sir Robert Anderson, when the latter took office at Scotland Yard. "You'll be blamed if you do your duty, and you'll be blamed if you don't."

Admitting all that was urged against Henderson, it amounted to this: that in seventeen years he had failed—once. Like some other Commissioners—not even excepting Mayne—he had allowed, after many years, his early vigilant and progressive policy to degenerate into one of *laissez-faire*. He had some reason to expect the police machine to run smoothly; it had never let him down. He had lost perspective. Yet, on the whole, he must be written down as one of those who were among the successful Commissioners of the Metropolitan Police. He had added to the reputation of Scotland Yard.

While Mr. Childers' new committee was sitting to decide what should be done about the police, a wire was sent to General Sir Charles Warren, a distinguished soldier who had occupied high administrative positions in the colonies, and

who at the moment was Governor of the Red Sea Littoral, asking him whether he would accept the Commissionership of Police. Sir Charles, apparently under the impression that he was asked to reorganise the police, accepted. He came home and was interviewed by the fresh committee.

This committee reported that there was practically no link between the divisions and headquarters. Apparently Henderson had let the scheme of district superintendents lapse, for there were only two when he resigned. As a consequence a great deal fell upon the divisional superintendents, who were purely local officers. There were no officers who might act as the aides of the Commissioner, and make independent enquiries and inspections. There was therefore undue centralisation at Scotland Yard. Reports and recommendations for promotion came from those who had themselves been recently promoted from the ranks. It was urged that a new rank between the Assistant Commissioners and the superintendents should be introduced. This was to be known as Chief Constable, and should be occupied by men of good social standing such as officers of the Army or Navy, though the committee did not suggest that the new men should be drawn exclusively from those classes.

Warren was a man of somewhat arrogant and impatient temperament. His advent was regarded with some nervousness by the police, and their fears were largely justified. "The task before the new chief," says Captain Melville Lee, "was definite if not easy. Before all things he had to restore the prestige which had suffered so severely on the day when the mob gained the upper hand, and he had to demonstrate, cost what it might, that the police could not again be defied with impunity."

"Sir Charles Warren's appointment to the head of the Force," wrote Sir Robert Anderson, "was a risky experiment. The police cannot tolerate military discipline, and this was their first experience of a military Chief Commissioner. For it is no disparagement of Sir Edmund Henderson to say that he was more of a civilian than a soldier; and, moreover, he came to Scotland Yard from Whitehall, where he had been at the head of the Prison Department. The effect was precisely what might have been anticipated. I speak with knowledge such as few others possessed, and I can say with definiteness that there was a dangerous want of sympathy between the Commissioner and the rank and file; and Sir Charles Warren was not the man

to make things smoother in such a case. There is no doubt that sedition was smouldering throughout the Force and that serious trouble might have resulted. But a change of sentiment was brought about in the most unlooked-for way. When, with his proverbial boldness, Sir Charles Warren stood forward to defend the Force against the unjust strictures of the Home Office upon the action of the Police upon the occasion of the Trafalgar Square riots of November, 1887, his faults were condoned; and by the time that I became his colleague, ten months later, his popularity with the uniformed Force was established."

He was soon in collision with Monro, the Assistant Commissioner of the Criminal Investigation Department. He would tolerate little interference from the Home Office; indeed, he took the attitude that the Commissioner once appointed by the Crown had certain powers by statute in the exercise of which he was responsible to no higher official. This in itself may explain some of the friction that notoriously existed between Sir Godfrey Lushington, the Under-Secretary at the Home Office, and the high officials of police. Sir Charles Warren, so far as circumstances would allow, was determined to be absolute. He had small knowledge of police affairs and was almost entirely without tact in the exercise of his functions. His was the iron hand without the velvet glove. His appointment contained all the ingredients of trouble.

No one, however, could dispute his energy, and in many respects he did good service. He summarised the reforms carried out during his first year of office under ten heads. A Chief Constable had been appointed to each of four districts, and an Assistant Chief Constable had been placed in charge of a class of instruction for candidates at Kennington. Another Assistant Chief Constable took control of the mounted force. Three hundred and thirty additional officers—sergeants and inspectors—had been appointed. The promoted men were a little jeered at in the force as "boy sergeants," for it had hitherto been the custom for only men of long service to be promoted, and many of the new officers had but a few years.

The telegraph service was extended. Each of the three Assistant Commissioners were assigned to special duties—one to deal with administration and discipline, one to take over all civil business, the third to be responsible for the Criminal Investigation Department. Superintendent Frederick Williamson became Chief Constable of this latter department. A new—and harder—truncheon of cocus wood was devised, to be carried

in a side pocket instead of a case. Boots of a different kind were issued. Divisional stores were established. The standard of height was raised—by half an inch—to 5 feet 9 inches, the limit of age reduced to twenty-seven, and the physical and educational examinations made somewhat more rigorous.

A new rank was created in the subdivisional inspector, which afforded superintendents relief and more effective control. One of the senior officers was thus on duty for every hour of the twenty-four. The whole of the clerical staff of the divisions was taken away from the control of the local superintendents and placed under the charge of the Executive Branch at Scotland Yard.

It is a curious fact that in neither of the reports signed by Sir Charles Warren for 1886 and 1887 is there a word about crime.

CHAPTER XIII

STORMY TIMES

THERE has never been implicit and absolute harmony between the Metropolitan and the City Police, although official relations have seemed on the surface peaceful. But the story of nearest approach to actual conflict can scarcely be evaded in any story of Scotland Yard. Whether it happened in the time of Sir Charles Warren, or in that of Sir Edmund Henderson, is not clear. The City Commissioner at the time was Sir James Fraser, and his assistant Sir Henry Smith, who later succeeded him. It is on the authority of the latter that the story is given.

"Lord Mayor's Day is a very busy time for the City Police. . . . Both Commissioners issue manifestos that no procession other than that of the Lord Mayor is to be in, or proceed through, certain streets. I was always early at my office on the morning of November 9, Sir James generally putting in an appearance about eleven o'clock. In the year 18— (the exact year need not be mentioned) a mounted man from Scotland Yard handed in, at 8 a.m., a written notice giving us warning that a procession from the North would pass through the City at 5 p.m. This incomprehensible message I handed to Sir James when he appeared. Taking a pen he wrote hurriedly, 'This is in direct contravention of your own orders.' This he read to me, but he added something which he did not read to me, nor did he tell me the answer he received, if he got an answer at all."

The City Police keep very few mounted men employed. On such an occasion as the Lord Mayor's procession the majority of mounted police are borrowed from Scotland Yard. "On the day of which I write we had forty men lent us under Superintendent Butt. . . . I knew Sir James would never allow a procession to enter the City at five o'clock, and as I sat on my horse in the Guildhall Yard I wondered what steps he would take to stop the one of which we had notice. I was not kept long in suspense. At four o'clock he came round from the

Old Jewry. 'Can you get two hundred men together, Smith?' he asked. 'Easily, sir,' I replied, 'if you will give me a quarter of an hour'; and I had the men drawn up within the time. 'Very good; now attend to me and see that you understand my orders. March those men to the City boundary, taking Superintendent Butt and his mounted men with you, and stop, by force if necessary, that procession from entering the City.'

"The procession, I would explain, was sure to be escorted by mounted men—processions always were in those Socialistic and Clerkenwell Green days—and thus, if the procession insisted on continuing its route and entering the City, there would be a free fight between the two police forces of the Metropolis, in which, moreover, one troop would find itself pitted against another in mortal combat! I knew if I disobeyed Sir James's orders he would ruthlessly dismiss me, and I knew if I carried them out the story was sure to improve in the telling, and that my future career stood a very good chance of being ruined. There was still the redeeming clause 'by force if necessary,' and as I rode alongside Superintendent Butt—who was evidently far from happy—I determined upon trying diplomacy. 'Who will be in command of the mounted men escorting the procession?' I asked him. 'Inspector Blank,' he replied. 'Ride forward then,' I said, 'as fast as you can, and explain to him the whole situation, and tell him he will do me a very great favour if he will wheel to the right and make his way westwards, avoiding the City altogether.' After sitting patiently for twenty minutes I descried Butt cantering back alone. 'It's all right, sir,' he shouted, and my anxiety was over, or nearly over, for I had still to face Sir James. On getting back to the Old Jewry, I gave him an account of what had happened. He looked a little disappointed, but very soon, I fancy, realised the difficulties I had had to contend with. 'Think no more about it,' he said. 'After all, it's just as well you have returned without any Scotland Yard scalps at your saddle-bow.'"

It is a pity to spoil this story. Sir Henry Smith's memory appears to have failed him on certain points. The numbers given are ludicrous, since the City could not have spared two hundred men—the Metropolitan Police would have in the normal course to send men to assist in lining the route. The action taken by the Metropolitan Police was quite correct. A procession may be prohibited from passing through certain streets, but it has full right to pass through any non-prohibited

streets. The Metropolitan Police having information of the intended route of such a procession, properly sent word to the City and sent the customary escort, which would have prevented any breach of the proclamation. The City Police, also properly, sent reinforcements to their boundary merely as a precaution.

Sir Charles Warren had eighteen months of comparative quietude, though every move of the Metropolitan Police was watched vigilantly and criticised with vigour. Events, however, were moving to a climax. Some few of the homeless outcasts of London commenced to spend the summer nights of 1887 in Trafalgar Square. As they found no disposition on the part of the police to interfere with them, their numbers increased until a horde of wretched creatures had made in effect their home in the centre of London. The place became a haunt of pitiable squalor and hopeless depravity. Questions were asked in Parliament, but the Government wobbled and nothing was done. A more experienced Commissioner might have foreseen the troubles likely to be brought about.

The Press began to direct attention to the extraordinary scenes that were taking place in Trafalgar Square each night, and vanloads of bread were sent by charitable persons for distribution. All the vagrants and unfortunates of London were at once attracted to the Square. "The loafer," reported a superintendent, "soon took cognizance of the transaction, and appeared as if by magic when the bread van arrived, and with equal celerity disappeared when he received the food, much to the injury of the deserving poor who were waiting."

New duties were thrust on the police. They opened registers of the unemployed, and made distributions of lodging-house tickets. Vacancies in casual wards were telegraphed from station to station, so that police officers might be aware of the nearest shelters available. All these were mere palliatives, and had little effect on the nightly gathering in Trafalgar Square.

Well-meaning agitators, and demagogues, saw their opportunity. One man attempted to make a speech to the crowd of nomads. He was prevented, but the following evening two or three men unfurled a black banner with the words "We will have work or bread" inscribed upon it, and a procession was organised to the offices of the Local Government Board. Thus began an agitation that soon spread to great dimensions. Inflammatory speeches were made, and processions organised in the central streets. Open violence was preached. Still the police remained inactive. One collision took place in the City

when the black banner of the agitators was captured, but the Metropolitan Police still held back.

It became apparent at last that if mob rule was not to prevail some decisive step would have to be taken. Warren issued an order forbidding Trafalgar Square as a place of public meeting. A timorous and ambiguous assent to this move was given by the Home Secretary. Some days meetings were allowed, on others they were peremptorily forbidden. "It was absolutely necessary," wrote Superintendent Dunlap, "that energetic steps should be taken to put an end to a state of things that was paralysing trade, and ruining the prospects of the entire district. But the moment that the Police attempted in the interest of law and order to put an end to a subject that was quickly becoming a scandal, they were assailed on all sides . . . that it was an attempt to interfere with the liberty of free speech. They were pronounced impertinent, and nothing was too bad in the eyes of some people to say with regard to the police force."

The first serious clash came on Monday, October 16, 1887. A disorderly mob headed by a red flag attempted to march from Trafalgar Square to the City. Mounted and foot police intervened, and after a fierce struggle in the Strand the crowd was driven back to Trafalgar Square. There, from the foot of Nelson's Column, excited orators hurled defiance at Sir Charles Warren and his minions. An order was given to clear the Square, and squads of police at once moved to the attack. By nightfall order was restored, but not without casualties on both sides.

In the morning hostilities broke out again. All around the neighbourhood of Trafalgar Square small bodies of police prevented crowds from forming, and a meeting in Adelaide Street was broken up. "Then it was," wrote an observer, "that the first signs were manifest that the temper of the constables, overstrained by long hours of duty, was beginning to give way, and there was a good deal of significance in the observation of one policeman as he bound up his bruised fist in a handkerchief, after a hard bout, 'This is what we have been waiting for. We are not going to do double duty for nothing.'

"There were arrests, and the conveyance of prisoners to the King Street Police Station by the 'frog's march' was frequently to be seen, arousing a good deal of indignation in the civilian mind unaccustomed to such methods. It is certain that had the police been less efficiently organised, the repetition of riot in the street would have followed, for more than one

tempt was frustrated by the movement of the police cavalry, against which the mob could not stand."

Meantime a big crowd was holding a meeting in Hyde Park. Police were rushed thither in omnibuses, and were in time to assist their comrades in stemming an attempt to parade the streets. Again there was a stand-up fight. Armed with broken pieces of park chairs and bits of the railings the rioters were met by the police with truncheons, while the mounted men rode down the crowd. At the end of the day the police were again victorious.

So throughout the month these conflicts went on. "These occurrences"—I quote Superintendent Dunlap once more—"entailed upon the police force generally an amount of duty and hardship never before equalled, hours of long and wearied waiting, insults heaped upon them by persons who should have supported them, hours without food, and yet the duty performed without murmur, not for a day, but for many weeks continually."

Some thousands of special constables were sworn in, but their services only relieved the regular police in small degree. The question of the right of public meeting in Trafalgar Square became in some sense a political one. Some of the political working men's clubs arranged to hold a demonstration in Trafalgar Square on November 13, to uphold the right of public meeting, and to protest against the imprisonment of Mr. William O'Brien, the agitator. The organisers had nothing to do with the unemployed.

However, all meetings were prohibited. The leaders of the unemployed saw an opportunity, and they decided to lead their men to Trafalgar Square on November 13. Acting presumably on instructions from the Government, Sir Charles Warren took strong precautions. On the advertised date 2,000 police lined the Square and strong bodies were posted at tactical points in the neighbourhood. Their orders were to prevent any procession from reaching the Square.

With bands and banners the demonstrators approached from all directions. Skirmishes were frequent with the outlying police, and batons had to be used. The crowd resolutely returned to the attack again and again, and at one time during the afternoon broke through the cordon of police. Then a squadron of the Life Guards was called out, each man carrying twenty rounds of ammunition, and a magistrate rode with them to read the Riot Act. That extreme step did not become

necessary, and after patrolling for a couple of hours they were withdrawn.

There were many casualties in the course of the long-drawn-out struggle of that day, but most of them were of trifling importance, scarcely warranting the epithet "Bloody Sunday" which was afterwards applied to it. Before the crowd was finally dispersed seventy-seven policemen were injured, and seventy-five civilians were treated at Charing Cross Hospital, as well as many at other places.

There was stormy discussion upon many aspects of the riot afterwards, and the action of the police was criticised with some venom.²⁶ No less a person than Sir Charles Russell (afterwards Lord Chief Justice of England) led a demand in the House of Commons for an enquiry into the right of public meeting, and contended that there was no power to prohibit a meeting unless it was illegal in itself. The Home Secretary retorted that while he regretted the lamentable and distressing events of "Bloody Sunday," he could not admit that the law recognised any right of meeting. He added that "this series of meetings had exhausted the police, terrified the public, and made the veto necessary." Sir Henry James, another distinguished lawyer, while a little doubtful of the strict legality of the prohibition, urged that the protection of the public from the caprices of a section was a paramount duty. This view was generally accepted, and Russell's motion was defeated.

In spite of the protests about "the illegal and brutal conduct of the police," they seem, on the whole, to have come out of the business with credit. The general body of the men had behaved with moderation and tact. Some part of the public at least recognised this, and a testimonial was organised, and the proceeds given to the Police Convalescent Asylum at Dover. But in some expressions made use of by the Home Secretary Warren saw a slur on the conduct of the police, and boldly resented them in print.

This kind of thing would scarcely improve relations between the Home Office and Scotland Yard. Warren, with his ardent zeal for reform, sought in every department of police for an outlet for his energy, and was exasperated by the red-tape methods of the Home Office. Mr. Matthews asserted that "the same practice, the same procedure, the same relations, the same form of communication, the same mode of administration had been followed by the Home Office as were followed from the creation of the police. There had been no modifica-

ion in the way instructions were conveyed, in the submission of proposals, in the manner in which letters were minuted, and ultimately answered and dealt with. 'The amount of correspondence, and the plans which had to be considered, sanctioned, or reversed, had been, however, extraordinarily great.'

In other words, for nearly sixty years the office methods of the department had remained the same. As Sir Robert Anderson remarked, though a well-oiled wheel does not suffer by turning, a little grit will impair its usefulness. The same gentleman gives an instance of the working of red tape.

"If one of my officers took a bus to Oxford Street or the City, he could not recover the fare without a certificate under my hand.²⁷ Matters of vastly greater importance were left to the discretion of a Superintendent; and a minute bearing my initials was sufficient authority for the arrest of a burglar or a murderer. But here I had to give my signature in full on three separate forms, certifying that the charge was legitimate and the amount correct. How my predecessors tolerated such a system is a mystery to me; but before many weeks passed I went on strike' respecting this and similar imbecilities. I directed the Superintendents to deal with all such matters, and I announced that I would add my initials to one form, and only to one, in each case, and this without examination of the details. Sir Charles Warren was indignant. For he had to sign all the forms in full. 'Yes,' I said, 'and that is further proof of the absurdity of the system, for the Treasury requires your certificate as Chief Commissioner, but mine is only for the Receiver of Police.' That settled the matter, for not only was Sir Charles eminently sensible, but he delighted in thwarting the Receiver!"

After nearly three years in office Sir Charles Warren resigned, because, according to Sir Robert Anderson, "he could no longer brook the nagging ways of the Home Office." But it cannot be held that the Home Office was altogether to blame for the failure of his administration, for he was a square peg in a round hole. There were few with whom he came in contact, either as superior or subordinate, with whom his imperious military attitude did not clash. He did many wise things and several not so wise.

During the last year of his office the Metropolitan Police were allowed to vote at Parliamentary elections, a privilege from which they had been expressly excepted when the force was created.

CHAPTER XIV

NEW SCOTLAND YARD

IN 1884 there chanced to be in London, on leave, the Inspector-General of the Bengal Police, Mr. James Monro. He was a barrister who had spent more than twenty years in India, where, during various stages of his career, he had been an Assistant Magistrate and Collector, and a District Judge. At this time search was being made for a man to succeed Sir Howard Vincent as chief of the Criminal Investigation Department, and Monro was the obvious man. Something of what he did for the detective service is told in a later chapter. It is sufficient to say here that an arrogant Commissioner and a niggling Home Office caused him to resign this post after a few years.

But he did not enjoy leisure long, for after Sir Charles Warren resigned in December, 1888, he was called upon to return to Scotland Yard as Commissioner. He was the first trained police official to hold command of the premier police force of the world. Of the ten men who have been appointed to that position, it is a little curious to remember, in view of the deep-rooted objections to a military police system, that seven have been soldiers, or at least have held military rank. One (Mayne) was a barrister, two (Henry and Monro) were police officials who had been occupied with police affairs practically all their lives.

Short as was the period during which Monro reigned, it was long enough to prove that he had most of the qualifications of a great police chief. He had a sane and clear-sighted view of the responsibilities of his position. The men themselves were his devoted slaves, and he did much to increase their pride in their calling, and to ensure their personal well-being. He came very near to Mayne in his appreciation of the fact that all steps should be taken to maintain amicable relations between the police and the public.

"Weak in numbers as the force is," he wrote, after he left

the service, "it would be found in practice altogether inadequate were it not strengthened, to an extent unknown, I believe, elsewhere, by the relations that exist between the police and public, and by the thorough recognition on the part of the citizens at large of the police as their friends and protectors. The police touch all classes of the public at many points beyond the performance of their sterner duties as representatives of the law, and they touch them in a friendly way. . . . The police, in short, are not the representatives of an arbitrary and despotic power, directed against the rights or obtrusively interfering with the pleasure of law-abiding citizens; they are simply a disciplined body of men engaged in protecting 'masses' as well as 'classes' from any infringements of their rights on the part of those who are not law-abiding."

With Monro things began to run easier in the force. Whether it was his influence, whether it was the advent of Robert Anderson, who followed him as the head of the Criminal Investigation Department, or whether it was a purely natural phenomenon, the crime figures began to drop. An exacting disciplinarian, he was always ready to lend a sympathetic ear and ready advice to any of his subordinates. His business was to maintain law and order. He was not greatly concerned to use traditional methods in the effort if he could think of better. When he could use the Press, for example, to prevent or detect crime he did so without hesitation, and at least once he got into hot water with the Home Office for his initiative in this direction.

There was, in fact, much friction with the Home Office on one thing and another. Sir Robert Anderson asserts that both Monro and Warren were driven out of Scotland Yard by this influence. "To show how grotesquely Mr. Monro was misjudged at Whitehall, I may mention that when he summoned the superintendents to a private conference on the Police Pension Bill he was suspected of a design to foment sedition, and an appeal was made to me confidentially to watch the proceedings."

It was while Monro was Commissioner that the Metropolitan Police moved from Whitehall Place and Old Scotland Yard to its present headquarters on the Embankment. Monro it was who gave the new premises the title New Scotland Yard.

The old headquarters had been long outgrown by the police before it was abandoned. The heterogeneous collection of

cramped offices, among which important departments were as hidden and inaccessible as in a rabbit warren, had become grotesquely inconvenient. Every inch of space had to be economised and utilised as on board ship, and important documents and records were stored, wherever room could be found, in cupboards and on landings.

When the Thames Embankment was constructed in 1862 several stretches of reclaimed land became available. Among these was the plot, some 70,000 square feet in area, on which Scotland Yard now stands. Originally this site was selected by Colonel Mapleson on which to build an ambitious National Opera House. Building operations were commenced, and had proceeded so far that, it is said, £90,000 had been spent. Then the scheme fell through, and after a year or so the materials of the partly erected building were sold for what they would fetch—a matter of £3,000. For a time after this the spot was derelict.

When, in 1886, it was decided to build a new centre of police, this was the site acquired. With singular and grim appropriateness one of the first duties that devolved upon the police, after they had acquired it, was to attempt to solve a mystery. During the year 1888 some mutilated portions of a woman's body were found secreted upon the site. The whole resources of the Criminal Investigation Department were bent to the discovery of the murderer and the identity of his victim. But all investigations failed, and so New Scotland Yard came into being over this scene of an unsolved mystery.

A sum of £200,000 was raised by loan for the erection of the new building, but first and last it cost, with the acquisition of the ground, £297,755. Its design was entrusted to Mr. Norman Shaw, R.A. No one can view this magnificent structure without conceding its artistic success. Although of recent years it has grown too small for the growing staff, and some departments have had to be housed elsewhere, it was eminently calculated at the time to fulfil the purposes for which it was planned. Accommodation was provided for every department of police, and for the first time the whole of the administration was under one roof, from the tailor's shop, where uniforms were fitted, to the Receiver's suite, where the business affairs of the police were handled. Several knotty little problems were ingeniously met by the architect. For instance, the Convict Supervision Office was situated at



OLD SCOTLAND YARD.

the back of the building so that any shy criminal who might have reasons of his own against advertising a visit to Scotland Yard could enter and leave by an unobtrusive back doorway. The imaginative may find some symbolism in the fact that the 2,500 tons of granite used in the building was hewn and dressed by convicts at Dartmoor.

The question of police pensions was one to which Monro devoted much time and labour. For sixty years the police had laboured under a sense of grievance in this matter, and at times open expressions of discontent had been made.

Originally there had been no pension or superannuation system of any kind in the police force. Ten years after the force came into existence a superannuation fund was created. Two and a half per cent. was deducted from police pay, and fines imposed upon drunken persons, or persons who assaulted the police, were allocated to the fund. But no man might receive a pension unless he was over sixty years old or incapacitated. Subject to those provisions he received a pension of half pay after he had served "with diligence and fidelity" for fifteen years, and two-thirds of his pay after twenty years. He might be retired on full pay if he was disabled by an injury received while on duty.

The Commissioners were afforded a large discretion in the administration of the fund, but the resources proved inadequate. By 1849 there was difficulty in finding money. By 1856 this difficulty had increased to such an extent that power was given to make good the deficiency out of any funds that came in the possession of the Receiver. Thereafter the pendulum swung to the other extreme. Pensions were stinted, and in 1862 the order was given that in no circumstances were full pensions to be given unless the recipients had served for at least twenty-eight years.

The effect of this policy of parsimony may be judged from the comment of a district superintendent made in 1870: "My experience leads me to observe that many of the men are not so energetic in the discharge of their duties as in former years, which I consider attributable to the very faint hopes constables now joining or who have joined since 1862 have of ever getting a pension, thus making the service a mere refuge until they can procure another situation, and, so long as the present system of superannuation remains, the effects will be very deteriorating to the Metropolitan Police. In former years many very intelligent men joined this service,

and were induced to remain in it, from the fact that they were entitled to a pension in fifteen years, but now that it is extended to thirty is, I consider, tantamount to none, as very few indeed can perform the onerous duties of a policeman for so long a period."

In fact, it was laid down by a chief surgeon of the Metropolitan Police, and by other authorities, that the limit of effective service that should be expected of a police officer was twenty-five years.²⁸ There was a little tinkering as the years went on, but no serious move was made. The average pension when Monro came to Scotland Yard was under £1 a week. In 1881 Sir William Harcourt, the then Home Secretary, had told the police that he hoped that at an early period it would be his grateful office to add to their comfort and content "by supplying a defect which has long been felt, in placing on a fixed and satisfactory footing, not only in London, but throughout the country, the superannuation and pension of those who have spent the best days of their lives in the service of their countrymen."

Still nothing was done until Monro took the matter in hand. He succeeded in establishing the principle that a police officer should be entitled to an absolute pension of half his pay after twenty-five years. The Police Act, 1890, which largely owed its inception to him, covered practically every detail of police pensions and gratuities and put things on a plain and understandable basis. In succeeding years there were various other Acts of Parliament, and police pensions are now governed by an Act of 1921. By this a man gets half his pay after twenty-five years' service, and two-thirds after thirty years. Adequate provision is made for men injured on duty and for the widows and orphans of police officers.

Before the Act of 1890 had come into force Monro resigned. There was a widespread belief in the force that he had been pushed from office because he had attempted a solution of their many grievances. There was a feeling that in the Act he had been thwarted in some of his intentions. That belief was very close to the truth. Monro knew that the hardships of the men were real and that they would have to be remedied. He warned the Government in emphatic terms, and when he saw that the question was to be paltered with he left office, sacrificing his career rather than have part in what he felt was a shabby and dangerous business.

Anyway, they did not consider the Act as helping them in

any great degree. "As drafted, it is worse than waste paper to us," declared one of their spokesmen. The Commissioner's chair was offered to Colonel Sir Edward Bradford, a distinguished soldier with much Indian service. Barely had he entered into office when the smouldering discontent burst into flame. The grievances of the men had been sedulously played upon by Socialist agitators from outside the force, as well as by malcontents from within. Active steps were taken for the formation of a police trade union. Meetings were called, and the following petition was sent to the Commissioner:

"We, the undersigned, most respectfully ask . . . that our weekly pay may be increased to the labour market value, which is at the present time at least 15 per cent. higher than we are receiving; and a majority in this and in other divisions are of the opinion that our present wages do not enable us to fulfil the necessary requirements of life. Besides being underpaid as compared with ordinary workmen, our conditions of living and abode are different and more expensive than those of workmen." They asked for increases of pay ranging from 3s. to 5s. a week for constables, and from 6s. to 7s. a week for sergeants. They added, after a request for variation of the hours of duty: "Again, many of your petitioners have long journeys to make when on annual leave, therefore they respectfully ask that they be granted ten and fourteen days, instead of the seven and ten days of annual leave hitherto granted them. . . ." Although not included in this particular petition, other planks in their platform were a pension of one-third of their pay after fifteen years' service, increasing proportionately to two-thirds after twenty-four years' service.

A separate petition in regard to an increase of pay was also signed by many of the inspectors.

One of the men who had played a prominent part in the agitation and the organisation of the men's petition was transferred from the E to the X Division. A fierce resentment was felt and expressed, particularly by the younger men, at this action. One Saturday evening 130 men at Bow Street refused to go on duty. They were immediately suspended, and Bradford some time later had them brought before him singly. He was stern and peremptory. To most of them he addressed similar words: "You are liable to be prosecuted for having refused to do duty, and it is a very serious matter. If you cannot think and act for yourself, but are led away by others, you are not fit to be a policeman. There is no alternative.

You must be dismissed—instantly. Right about face. March.”

Thus forty men were dismissed. Others were transferred to different divisions. But this rigorous and prompt punishment did not finish the matter. A meeting of constables had been arranged to take place in Bow Street Police Station court-yard on the Monday following. Of course, this was not allowed, but the men adjourned to a near-by public-house. Delegates from ten divisions were present, as well as the strikers, and it was resolved to attempt to precipitate a general strike of police that night. To their other demands was added the resolution that if the strike were arranged, no one was to resume duty till Bradford was removed.

Spite of the fiery words of the delegates there was no general police strike. The older men and senior officers, though mostly in complete sympathy with the demand for improved conditions of service, were not to be stampeded into violent action. At a few stations only did the men refuse duty.

But that ancient centre of police, Bow Street itself, witnessed some strange scenes that July evening. The suspended and dismissed constables who loitered there, sulky and resentful, were joined by virulent agitators of all shades of “redness,” and roughs of no particular political prepossessions, but ripe for any mischief. It was a rainy, dirty night, but the weather did not deter a crowd, estimated at 5,000 people, gathering round Bow Street. There was shouting, groaning, and hooting, and as the night wore on the mob lashed itself into a truculent mood. Mounted constables were sent to clear the street, but they were few in numbers, and they met with fierce resistance. They were jeered at and reviled. From the upper windows of the police station itself a pitcher of water and a few pieces of crockery were thrown at them, for many of the comrades of the strikers had refused duty and were detained in the station. The foot police who were actually on duty sullenly kept themselves as aloof as possible in groups near the station. They were little disposed to take the offensive, and obviously were in a position of some embarrassment.

On the whole, it does not appear that the striking police took much active physical part in the violence that was enacted, although they did not hesitate to incite and encourage the rioters in their resistance. As the mounted officers tried to disperse the mob, eggs, vegetables, and later, bottles were hurled at them. Determined efforts were now and again

made to throw them from their horses. Fierce rushes took place on one side or the other, and, indeed, it seemed at one time as though the mounted police might be routed. The timely arrival of a couple of troops of Life Guards prevented this calamity, but for hours afterwards something in the nature of a small pitched battle waged.

Shutters and hoardings were torn down for use as weapons or missiles. Cabs and carriages were halted and turned about to hinder and frustrate the charges of the mounted men. So things went on till after midnight, when reinforcements of the Life Guards, brought hastily from Knightsbridge Barracks, arrived. Constables from Southwark, too, had taken the places of those who had struck. In the early hours of a depressing rainy morning quiet and order were restored.

There were spasmodic and half-hearted attempts to renew the rioting on other days, but these outbursts were quickly subdued. It was a time of test for the police. The majority of them were torn both ways. Discipline and training told them that they must be loyal to the service. On the other hand, there was much real substance in the grievances of the force, whatever might be thought of the method of ventilating them, and unquestionably they sympathised with the strikers. But loyalty told. The agitation died out, and though there were attempts to bring about the formation of a police union they proved abortive. It was made known that any man who joined such an organisation would be peremptorily dismissed. Yet it is engaging to record that no word of this, one of the most serious internal crises that had happened to the Metropolitan Police up to that time, is found in the Commissioner's report for that year.

Thus Bradford began as Commissioner.

CHAPTER XV

HENRY TAKES CONTROL

THE storm that broke on the advent of Sir Edward Bradford as Commissioner was the chief internal trouble with which he had to deal during his term of office. He ruled the police for thirteen years with firmness and discretion. On the whole his term was colourless. He left no striking mark upon the force, and may be said to have "carried on," maintaining the prestige of the police if he did not add to it. He was ordered to "go slow." The Home Office had repented the large augmentations that had been sanctioned in Warren's time and Bradford had been told, in effect, that he must do the best he could. He had very able aides and subordinates, and he does not seem to have made any undue interference with them.

Perhaps this policy was carried too far. As the Metropolitan Police grew, so that delegation of important duties became more and more imperative, complete central control was rather a word than a fact. Commissioner after Commissioner came as new brooms determined to sweep very clean. They realised how ineffective their touch was with the rank and file, and how much power lay in the hands of the divisional superintendents. Sir Edmund Henderson tried district superintendents. Sir Charles Warren appointed new men for the same purpose, and called them Chief Constables. The same question of this link in the chain of responsibility gave rise to some diversity of opinion between Sir Edward Henry and Sir Nevil Macready. Henry held that Chief Constables should be inspecting officers—the eyes and ears of the Commissioner. Macready, on the other hand, was inclined to regard them rather as brigadiers in actual control of a defined section of the force.

It is clear, however the question has been dealt with, that the point has been considered by most Commissioners. Bradford accepted things as they were.²⁹ The result was that superin-

superintendents were trusted very much as in the old times. It is only fair to add that, generally speaking, they were men worthy of trust. Said a writer in *The Times* in 1908: "In the old times the superintendent found himself monarch, absolute in power, over his division. Theoretically he was, of course, subject to the Commissioner, and liable to be checked by an Assistant Commissioner or Chief Constable, but, in practice, unless some very glaring case of injustice was reported in high quarters, his word was law in the division. His reports and recommendations were accepted without question or inquiry, and there was no appeal against his judgment possible for any man of lower rank whom he chose to punish or even to dismiss."

"The general public does not come into much personal contact with superintendents. I have had that privilege in former days, and I desire to say at once that I knew among them men of the strictest probity and justice, who were above all prejudice and all small-mindedness, and who always placed duty and the welfare of the service before every personal consideration. But this was not the case always; and where the superintendent was open to 'influence' of any kind, whether from below or from outside, the results were disastrous in individual cases of men under their authority, and the reputation of the force as a whole was in constant danger."

One of the most vicious habits that grew up and remained with the police until Henry swept it away was the custom of presenting officers of senior rank with a testimonial on their retirement. This was quite a different thing to the testimonial from colleagues that is now usual, and publicans and other tradesmen were not loth to subscribe. They felt that money invested in this way could scarcely fail to keep them on good terms with the remaining police whose turn would come some day. It became a little too businesslike. Mr. W. T. Ewens, in "Thirty Years at Bow Street Police Court," says:

"A police officer who was to be honoured in this way was present on one occasion when a man was appointed to collect subscriptions on his behalf. 'Start work to-morrow,' he said to the collector. 'Don't delay. If you go to a man to-morrow and ask for a subscription he will give you a couple of guineas cheerfully. If you go in three weeks he will say, Yes, I knew Inspector So-and-So very well. I have just been introduced to his successor, and he seems a very good fellow. Here is half a guinea.' . . . The collector did as he was told, and the testimonial amounted to over £200."

One melancholy episode of the first years of Bradford Commissionership may be recalled. Of the hundreds of thousands of men who have passed through the Metropolitan Police only one has ever been convicted of murder. A Constable George Cooke, of the X Division, had formed an association with an ex-barmaid which he was anxious to break. The girl followed him while he was on duty one night in the neighbourhood of Wormwood Scrubs Prison. She taunted and jeered at him, till, provoked beyond endurance, he struck her down with his truncheon. Leaving the body, he continued duty and the murder was discovered by the man who relieved him in the early morning. The evidence led clear to Cooke, and he was arrested, confessed, and was ultimately hanged.

Many notable crimes took place during this thirteen years, some of which have afforded almost classic examples of great detective work. Neill Cream, the poisoner of women; Jabez Balfour, the story of whose capture will be found elsewhere; Fowler and Milsom, the Muswell Hill murderers, who were brought to justice through the instrumentality of a child's toy lantern, were among these. Never, perhaps, were able men engaged in the detection of crime. The years 1895 and 1896 were notable for a recurrence of garrotting in the neighbourhood of the Borough, but justice was meted out with a stern hand to the perpetrators, and the epidemic was checked.

For a little the policy of loading the police with extra duties was stemmed. In 1892 police were withdrawn from special duty under the Smoke Nuisance Abatement Act, and two years later the control of common lodging-houses was transferred to the London County Council. It was in 1894, too, that a Royal Commission on the Unification of London reported in favour of bringing the whole of the police of London under one administration. This was a counsel of perfection which was discreetly ignored by the Government.

The police officer of that day, if asked to express an opinion on the respective advantages of choosing a county councillor or choosing his own boots, would have unhesitatingly decided in favour of the boots. But he got a municipal vote in 1893—the Parliamentary franchise had been granted in 1887—and it was not till a year later that the heavy, crippling, constabulary boot, which was supplied by contract, was abandoned, and a boot allowance made so that the men might fit themselves with suitable footgear. Up to that time the perennial jest of the

flat-footed constable had a bitter flavour of truth. There was a comic song:

You can tell him by his feet
As he walks along his beat.

Following this, an amount of public attention was focussed upon the fact that through the hottest days of summer the police constable was obliged to swelter in his heavy winter clothing. Pressure upon the authorities to alter this sort of thing began in 1895, but it was not till the summer of 1897 that loose serge patrol jackets superseded the old heavy, tight-fitting tunics during the summer months.

Bradford lost his grip as the years grew upon him. He saw that changes in police administration were inevitable, but he did not care to saddle himself with fresh and harassing detail. In the years following the close of the South African War, when bodies of unemployed paraded the streets he was haunted by the fear of a repetition of the riots that caught the police off their guard in Henderson's time. Bodies of police had to be everywhere, there and everywhere. There was an incessant strain, and a jumpy feeling crept into the force. The problem was perhaps the chief factor in his resignation. It was simply solved by his successor, who obtained power to regulate street collections and thus cut away the object of many of these demonstrations.

An era of many developments in police administration began at the opening of the twentieth century. Sir Robert Anderson, after honourable and distinguished service for many years, retired from the Criminal Investigation Department in 1901. It was obvious that the veteran Sir Edward Bradford would have to follow him in a little. The Government, with precision, decided to kill two birds with one stone by "trying out" a possible Commissioner as chief of the C.I.D. The choice fell upon Mr. (later Sir) Edward Henry, already an outstanding figure among the higher police officials of the time. For a quarter of a century he had done notable police service in India. As magistrate-collector, Inspector-General, and Commissioner of great districts he had built up a big reputation, which had been enhanced by his finger-print researches. He spent some time, during the South African War, in organising the civil police of Johannesburg and Pretoria.

He came, therefore, to Scotland Yard experienced and well equipped, with a fresh but sane perspective on the modern

problems of police science that were beginning to arise. After two years in the C.I.D. as Assistant Commissioner, he became in 1903, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police. He proved himself, in the phrase of the force, "a good policeman." This is to say, he had vision, energy, tact and knowledge, as well as those indefinable qualities which any successful Commissioner must have. The Royal Commission which reported in 1905 after the most exhaustive enquiry that has ever been held into the conduct and administration of the Metropolitan Police expressed its "high appreciation of his ability, tact, and vigilance." He sought no limelight, he did not play to the gallery, but his reforms were far-reaching. No man ever lived who could handle such an instrument as the Metropolitan Police without making mistakes in greater or lesser degree. As was once said, every police officer lives over a volcano. But Sir Edward Henry made few errors, and those few, it may be surmised, were caused by the practical difficulty of obtaining money from the powers that were. But if he had done nothing more—and he did much more—than initiate a practical fingerprint system, and establish a police training school, his name merits record as that of one who, in modern times, struck the greatest blow at the growth of crime, and improved the status of the police officer beyond measure.

The first few years after he became Commissioner were trying enough. The force was undermanned by at least two thousand men. He had to catch up the arrears which had accumulated under Bradford. One of those periodical agitations against the police, which seem to arise in cycles, developed and was fostered by organisations and newspapers till an atmosphere of distrust and suspicion was rife. In 1904 a constable was charged with perjury against a man whom he had arrested for burglary. It was alleged that he had placed a knife and a hammer in the pockets of his prisoner, and he was sent to five years' penal servitude. It was, of course, an isolated case, but it did not help matters.

But it was in 1906 that the grumbles and innuendoes directed at the police took a focus. Towards midnight one April night a constable arrested a woman, who gave the name of Eva D'Angely, and charged her with being "a common prostitute behaving in a riotous and indecent manner at Regent Street." The case was heard at Marlborough Street Police Court, where evidence was given that she was a respectable married woman waiting for her husband. The magistrate, a little doubtful

dismissed the case. Almost at once there was launched a fierce attack, directed at the constable in particular and the police in general, for what was generally held to be a gross and gratuitous outrage on a decent woman.

The loose charges made against the police were accentuated by the fact that a week or two previously two young gentlemen of some professional and social standing had been arrested for being drunk and disorderly on boat-race night. Some hours after their arrest they were examined by a divisional surgeon, who certified that they were "recovering from the effects of excessive drinking." Other doctors who were called in denied this conclusion. The men were taken before a magistrate next day, who discharged them. This did not end the affair. The story told by these gentlemen was that they were perfectly sober, but, indignant at the brutality to which a young man under arrest was exposed, had followed certain police officers to take their numbers. Suddenly they found themselves under arrest, roughly handled, and swept off to Vine Street Police Station. There, what took place revealed "brutal methods of treatment and procedure, denoting culpable negligence, not to say encouragement, on the part of the inspector."³⁰

These two cases were thrashed to death by an indignant press and sections of the public. Other instances of police brutality and venality were raked up, and in the end Parliament appointed a Royal Commission to examine into a series of charges against the police.

The Commission sat for sixty-four days and heard a multiplicity of evidence for and against the police. It was an ironic fact that the case of D'Angely, which had aroused the most indignation, was very easily settled. She and her husband had gone to Paris and vanished. British and French detectives traced her out, and invited them to come to London to give evidence before the Commission, even offering to pay their expenses. But, perhaps wisely, they would not waste their time. It was, in fact, established beyond doubt that the woman was a well-known prostitute.

In the other case the police were held to have acted properly and without violence. Besides these two cases there were investigated seventeen others—all that the widest publicity could find to bring against the police force. In the course of a voluminous report the Commission said:

"In eleven of the special complaints into which we enquired we find that the conduct of the Police was correct, and in the

remaining eight cases we find that there was misconduct, more or less serious, or errors of judgment on the part of the constables and officers concerned. In enquiring into these nineteen complaints we had to consider the circumstances of twenty-three arrests. . . . In eighteen instances the arrests were justified, and in five not justified. In three out of the five cases in which the arrests were not justified there was conduct on the part of the person arrested which afforded some pretext for police intervention, and in one case the constable interfered under a mistake. In no case was there misconduct found on the part of an officer of the rank of Inspector, but we found that in five cases an Inspector had committed errors of judgment, and in one case that an Inspector had committed an impropriety. The total number of men found guilty of misconduct is nine, of whom one only, a sergeant, is of a rank above that of ordinary constable."

There were general charges as well as particular accusations against the police. Bribery by bookmakers and by prostitutes, it was suggested, was a common thing. It is worth commenting that not one of the specific charges held to be proved involved anything in the nature of bribery. They were mostly those in which constables had lost their temper and been guilty of assault, a few being cases of wrongful arrest. On the question of bribery by women the Commission remarked:

"The conditions under which a constable performs his duty on beat or on patrol make it practically useless for a woman to attempt to bribe with a view to secure immunity from arrest. Of course, if a woman who has been cautioned, and whom a constable is about to arrest for a subsequent accosting were to slip 5s. into his hand to induce him to let her go, that act, if the constable were ready to misconduct himself, might be successful, and the affair might terminate by his saying with affected sternness, 'Move on; go about your business,' or something of that kind on that particular occasion. But even then there would be great risk of the transaction being observed. In the populous and crowded parts of the town which these women frequent, the beats are small and the number of constables on patrol so considerable that it would be useless for a woman to procure freedom from arrest by small bribes to this or that complaisant constable. If she should succeed in obtaining immunity from one constable it would profit her but little, because before she had gone a few yards farther on in the street, she might meet another constable whom she had

never seen before; and, again, it must be borne in mind that a constable is only allowed to be on one beat for a short time. . . . We feel reasonably sure that, whatever may have been the case for short periods in years gone by, there is no ground for believing that the practice of accepting money from prostitutes prevails to any considerable extent."

The Commission was not quite so definite on the matter of bribery by bookmakers. "We . . . have come to the conclusion that there is no reason for believing that bribery of the police by bookmakers has been carried on according to any organised system; but the force as a whole cannot be absolved altogether from the charge of receiving money from bookmakers."

On the whole the report of the Commission was strongly in favour of the police, and equivalent to a verdict of acquittal of the gross accusations that had been levelled against it. In general the Commission held:

The discipline of the force was well maintained.

The general arrangements for the maintenance of order and the prevention of offences in the streets, and for the apprehension and punishment of offenders, were excellent and were carried out almost invariably in a thoroughly satisfactory manner.

The Metropolitan Police Force was entitled to the confidence of all classes of the community.³¹

It was in 1908 that a Select Committee met to consider the question of giving the police a weekly day of rest, instead of one day a fortnight. The following year steps were taken to give effect to the recommendations of the Committee. It was estimated that 1,600 men would have to be added to the force for this purpose, but the money to provide them was not forthcoming, and, in fact, it was not till 1913 that the number was so nearly completed as to allow each member of the force fifty-two days off each year in addition to annual leave.

The mechanisation of the army is a phrase now much used. The mechanisation of the police began under Sir Edward Henry, when police were allowed to ride bicycles on certain duties in outside districts, and motor-cars began to be employed in a limited way. A Home Secretary in 1898 had expressed doubts as to the utility of cycles for police purposes, but by 1913 there were close upon three thousand of the Metropolitan Police authorised to ride them upon certain duties,

and it was reported that their services were of great utility. The day of organised motor police in the Metropolis has not yet come, but the police—or it may be the Home Office—has always been a little slow in keeping abreast of the times in these matters. The first mention of motor-boats in a Commissioner's report occurs in 1910. "Ten motor-boats were in use by police on the River Thames at the end of the year, and have proved very satisfactory, affording increased protection and more effective supervision than the rowing boats which they superseded." As a matter of fact, for several years afterwards the police motor-boats, although an obvious improvement upon rowing boats, were by no means anything to boast about. They were among the slowest and most unhandy craft on the river, and suffered frequently from mechanical defects. Again, in all probability, it was a question of money.

For eighty years the many acts of gallantry performed by police officers were unmarked by any tangible and permanent official token of appreciation. There were, of course, promotions and rewards, and on occasion the medal of the Royal Humane Society would be awarded to some brave officer. Beyond this there was nothing. Somewhat belatedly the King's Police Medal was instituted to be awarded to men who had "performed acts of exceptional courage and skill or have exhibited conspicuous devotion to duty." Only forty of these medals might be awarded annually to the police of Great Britain and Ireland, and the Metropolitan Police has always been prominent in the receipt of the distinction. The qualifications for the award of the medal are:

Conspicuous gallantry in saving life or property, or in preventing crime or arresting criminals; the risks incurred to be estimated with due regard to the obligations and duties of the officer concerned.

A specially distinguished record in administrative or detective service.

Success in organising police forces or fire brigades or departments or in maintaining their organisation under special difficulties.

Special services in dealing with serious or widespread outbreaks of public disorder or of fire.

Valuable political and secret services.

Special services to Royalty and Heads of States.

Prolonged service; but only when distinguished by very exceptional merit and ability.

There were two events of internal interest to the force in 1911. One of these was a much-needed increase of pay to all ranks. The other, following the siege of Sidney Street, was the placing of automatic pistols in the armouries of the different police stations to supersede the obsolete revolvers hitherto at the disposal of the police.

Labour unrest, of which signs had not been lacking, broke into open strife in 1910, 1911, and 1912, involving the Metropolitan Police in heavy duties. A strike of miners in South Wales towards the end of 1910 caused apprehension in the minds of the authorities. Troops and police were rushed to the disturbed districts and put under the command of General Sir Nevil Macready, who was entrusted with almost plenary powers for the preservation of the peace. Among them were five hundred men of the Metropolitan Police, who thus came under the command of a man who was ultimately to become Commissioner. Sir Nevil's chief assistants were two army officers, Captains Horwood and Childs, whom he later brought to Scotland Yard and who are now Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner respectively.

The police found themselves confronted with rough work, and suffered many casualties, especially from stone-throwing. But they maintained the traditions of the London police. Says Sir Nevil Macready: "When it comes to baton charges one police force is probably as good as another; but for the tactful, firm, good-tempered handling of an angry mob so as to prevent, if possible, resort to force, the Metropolitan Police Officer stands out far beyond his country comrades. The Metropolitan Police were at times severely handled, but nothing could exceed their equable temper and stolid impartiality. That they were not altogether popular in the valleys is a tribute to their efficiency."

For several months this detachment was kept in South Wales. After they returned to London there was a month or two of comparative quiet. But soon there was plenty of trouble in hand for them. During 1911 Metropolitan Police were sent to Hull, Salford, and Cardiff, to cope with labour troubles. London itself had its turn in August, when a big transport strike developed, and soon assumed serious proportions. All police were recalled from leave, police pensioners were asked to reassume duty temporarily, and 8,000 special constables were sworn in.

The year 1912 was even worse from a police point of view.

The succinct history of that period may be extracted from the Commissioner's report:

"The labour unrest in 1912 was much more serious and prolonged than that of 1911. It commenced on the 9th of May with a strike which lasted six weeks of some 25,000 tailors and tailoresses. On 27th of May the watermen and lightermen came out and were joined by the dock and transport workers, the highest estimated number of strikers being 58,500. All available police were employed protecting property and conveying foodstuffs from the docks to Smithfield and other markets. Protection was afforded to carriers of merchandise, and tugs and barges on the river were accompanied by police. Conflicts occurred between strikers and non-union men and free labourers in which several were injured, and free labourers were discovered in the possession of firearms. On 11th of June a conflict took place at Millpond Bridge, Rotherhithe, between strikers and police, as a result of which complaints of rough usage were made against police. These complaints were investigated at an enquiry held by Mr. Chester Jones, whose report was presented to Parliament.

"The continuance of the strike occasioned much poverty and distress in the East End, and food was distributed by charitable organisations. The strike terminated early in August, but it was some time before all the men had returned to work. During the whole period of the strike pensioners were employed to assist police, and their engagement was extended after its termination to enable police to take annual and ordinary leave, which had been suspended during the strike."

Some very important events may be traced to the action of two constables who, in 1909, arrested a couple of men for unlawfully knocking and ringing at the door of a house "to the annoyance of the inhabitants." The prisoners were alleged to be drunk, and were taken to Gerald Road Police Station, where it appeared that one of the accused men was the occupier and the other a lodger of the house. It was a trumpety squabble between man and wife, and the station officer on duty, Inspector John Syme, refused the charge, but officially recorded that blame was not to be attached to the constables.

The subdivisional inspector, however, held that the constables were in fault. They were put "on report" and reprimanded by the acting superintendent. At this point Inspector Syme attempted to justify the officers, and his interference resulted in he himself being reprimanded by a Chief

Constable. No doubt he accepted the reproof ungraciously, and also no doubt he felt that discipline in the B Division was oppressive. A more philosophic or tactful man would have let matters rest, but Syme brooded on the matter. It was decided that it would be well to transfer him, and accordingly he was sent to a station at Fulham. He regarded this as a punishment—which it was not—and appealed to the Commissioner, making strong statements as to the discontent in B Division. Thereupon he was charged with making unfounded allegations against his superior officers, and transferred to Harlington.

This affected him as rank injustice. He threatened the Commissioner that he would bring the matter before Parliament, and in January, 1910, he was suspended for insubordination. Brought before a Discipline Board, he declined to resign, and was dismissed the force.

There were many people who felt that he had been badly treated. He adopted something of the methods of the suffragettes in drawing public attention to his troubles, and again and again was charged in the police courts. Mr. Winston Churchill, when Home Secretary, offered to reinstate him as station sergeant—an offer which he refused. Thirty-two times he went to prison, and twenty-eight times he went on hunger strike. In 1924 a committee presided over by Mr. Justice Talbot was appointed to enquire into his case. This tribunal reported:

“ Though the manner in which the affair of the transfer was handled was far from judicious, what was actually done was merely to remove Mr. Syme from one subdivision to another, with no reduction of pay or rank, and in a form which showed that the transfer was not a punishment. It is admitted that this was a matter within the absolute discretion of the Assistant Commissioner. In our opinion it is impossible to say that by this a wrong was done to Mr. Syme for which he could claim compensation.

“ In our opinion the awards of December 20th, 1909, and January 29th, 1910, were rightly made.”

A little later Mr. Syme was certified as a lunatic, and was for a time confined in a mental hospital. After a while he was discharged. I have dwelt at length upon this episode because it was through John Syme that the Police and Prison Officers Union was started—an organisation that in its few years of life was to have a potent effect upon police affairs.

The risk to which the higher as well as the subordinate officers of police may be exposed was exemplified during 1912. One November night, as Sir Edward Henry was leaving his motor-car to enter his house, a man named Bowes fired three shots at him with a revolver. The first bullet passed through his overcoat; the second entered the groin, wounding the Commissioner in the stomach; the third went wide of its objective. Bowes had a month before been refused a licence as a motor-omnibus driver by the Public Carriage Department.

At his trial at the Old Bailey a defence of insanity was raised. Sir Edward Henry, before sentence was passed, appealed to Mr. Justice Darling: "The members of my family, one of whom is quite a small child, arrived on the scene so soon after the shots had been fired as to have been almost spectators of what happened. The impression made on their minds of what they saw has been a lasting impression, and they have been moved to pity by considerations of the prisoner's youth and the conditions of his home. When their thoughts in years to come travel back to the events of this evening, as they inevitably must, the pain of recollection will be mitigated if they could feel that I have pleaded—and not ineffectually—to induce your lordship to mercifully weigh the sentence you think it is your duty to pass on the prisoner."

Sentence of fifteen years' penal servitude was given, but Bowes does not appear to have served the whole term. In 1924 Bowes was in Florida, where he had bought a house. There, probably in a fit of derangement, he shot and wounded a man. The local sheriff met him as he was flourishing an automatic pistol, and, taking refuge behind a tree, shot him dead.

CHAPTER XVI

LONDON UNPROTECTED

WITH the outbreak of war in August, 1914, a heavy strain was placed on all departments of the Metropolitan Police. More than a thousand men joined up immediately hostilities broke out. Another thousand were sent to help protect dockyards and military stations. Three hundred and fifty men experienced in drill were sent to help train the new army.

Thus depleted, the force had to meet all the novel exigencies created by the war. Leave was restricted to one day a fortnight. Twelve hundred pensioners were recalled for service. A force of 30,000 special constables was enrolled under Colonel Sir Edward Ward. But special constables, energetic and enthusiastic though they were, could never entirely replace the regular, experienced policeman. Not a man in the force but was subjected to long and arduous hours of duty.

The Criminal Investigation Department in particular was driven hard. The intelligence branches of the services had a shrewd idea of the machinations of German spies in England, and they consulted with Scotland Yard. The day after war was declared a score of spies were put under arrest, and, to use the words of Sir Basil Thomson, "the German Intelligence Service was paralysed." Picked men from the C.I.D. were taken for work with the Intelligence Police in France. The Special Branch was augmented. It was called upon by almost every Government department for every conceivable sort of enquiry. The more hysterical portion of the public bombarded it with stories of mysterious spies. "We took on a number of pensioners to cope with the correspondence," said Sir Basil Thomson. "I remember the hopeless expression on their faces when I visited them about a week after they had started. Piles of unopened letters lay on the floor, great stacks of docketed letters stood on every table. They were working I do not know how many hours' overtime, and still the flood of correspondence was threatening to submerge them. In the first few months

I do not think that any of us left the office before midnight. If all the angry people who poured in their complaints had realised that everyone had to suffer some inconvenience in the war we might have done better work."

It is a very real debt that England owes to those men of Scotland Yard who fought and frustrated the underground designs of the enemy during the hectic years of war. But the circumvention of spies can receive no more than a passing reference in this place. Crime in the ordinary sense dropped as the war progressed. But the substitution of paper for gold currency offered opportunities that were quickly seized by some criminal minds. In 1915 it was estimated that forged Treasury notes to the value of £60,000 were in circulation. Chief Detective Inspector Fowler was ordered to get to the root of the matter. He and his assistants found that the notes had been passed by an ex-convict, who would buy some small trifle at a shop and obtain change for the forged notes. It was of little use arresting this man, for the person Scotland Yard wanted most badly was the actual printer. A close watch was therefore kept on the ex-convict. He was traced to a paper-merchant's, where he bought some expensive typewriting paper, which was similar to that used in the production of the bogus notes, but he dodged his shadowers, and was only picked up again at a little card party at an address in Jermyn Street.

At this card party it was noticed that there was present a young man who bore traces of printer's ink upon his fingers. But whenever he lost he changed a note. The ex-convict was stopped by a detective as he was leaving the party. "I used to know that young fellow," said the officer. "He was a clerk at your old office. His name is Brown." "You are mistaken," retorted the other. "He is not a clerk. He is a printer, and his name is ——."

This was enough. London was searched for a printer of the name given. At last a coach-house and stable in the possession of such a man were discovered in an obscure street in North London. Fowler and his men quietly watched this place for three days. At the end of that time the ex-convict was observed to enter, and when he came out—into the arms of the waiting officers—his pockets were stuffed with forged notes. In the stable, which was crammed with machinery of the most complete description for the production of forged notes, was found the young man of the card party, who fainted when the police burst in. It was to the misplaced ingenuity of this young man

that a change in the design of Treasury notes and method of printing was due.

I have said that ordinary crime dropped during the war. In fact, the criminals of the country were as ready and willing to fight as any other section of the community. There were 1,100 habitual criminals in the ranks in 1915, and it is on record that at least one of them won the Victoria Cross. "He volunteered," says Sir Basil Thomson, "on a night of heavy rain, to crawl to the enemy's trenches alone and silence a machine-gun post. He told his officer before he left that if he did not return in half an hour the company was free to open fire, 'and never mind me.' Just before the interval expired he dropped back into his own trench, plastered with mud from head to foot. Returning again to the front after the award of the V.C., he was killed in action. I knew the man—a rough, silent Lancashire lad, who had come to grief, I believe, through a love of adventure, and who was as free from egotism, pose, and self-consciousness as any of the men I knew."

In all 4,027 men of the Metropolitan Police joined the armed forces of the Crown during the war. Three hundred and sixty of these lost their lives, and 572 were wounded. Nearly half of those who served gained promotion, no fewer than ninety-six being given commissions. Three hundred and seventy-seven medals for gallantry, from the D.S.O. to the Meritorious Service Medal, were earned by the policemen who took the field.

As a memorial to those of their comrades who fell the members of the Metropolitan and City Forces erected a hospital in the grounds of the Police Orphanage at Strawberry Hill. This was formally opened by the Prince of Wales in 1923.

One of the results of the war was the creation of an Aliens Department at Scotland Yard. All aliens over sixteen years of age must now register with the police, and since there are over 167,000 aliens in London, the volume of work involved in making enquiries is considerable.

To understand some of the serious post-war happenings in the Metropolitan Police it is necessary to go back to the years immediately preceding the war. Sir Edward Henry held that trade union leaders recognised during 1912 that they would have to gain some control of the police if strikes were to be made effective. During 1913 some dissatisfaction existed in the force on the old questions of pay and conditions. The

minimum wage for a constable at that time, it should be explained, was 27s. weekly, and the maximum 37s. 6d. An attempt, sponsored by ex-Inspector John Syme, was made to form a Police and Prison Officers Union. At about the same time a police periodical suggested the formation of a police federation at which police officers might confer and make joint representations to their superiors on any point of issue. These two proposals were quite distinct. They were met by the following retort in Metropolitan Police Orders:

"It has come to the knowledge of the Commissioner that attempts have been made to induce members of the Metropolitan Police to join a federation or union. He desires to point out that membership of such an association is prohibited by Standing Orders, and that any man serving who violates these orders, or incites others to violate them, renders himself liable to disciplinary proceedings, which may result in his dismissal from the force."

Nevertheless the union continued to exist as a sort of secret organisation which did not publish the names of its members. A discussion took place in Parliament in 1914 on what became known as the "right to confer," but on this and the question of a union the Government were inflexible. "The police who accept the position," said the Home Secretary, "shall have as great benefits in pay and hours of labour and in other conditions as would be given to any other class of public servant who has a trade union behind him." As a fact the extra pay, so far as constables were concerned, proved to be an increase of half a crown a week.³²

The outbreak of war stilled for the time all sectional grievances. The police dropped the ventilation of their troubles, and proceeded to "do their bit." But the war wore on. The cost of living soared. Patriotism would not buy bread-and-butter for the children. No doubt the Home Office was too busy with problems arising from the war to remember the police. Sir Nevil Macready says:

"In 1918, when high wages were ruling throughout the country and labour unrest was rampant, those who pulled the union strings were not slow to raise the attractive cry that the men, by asserting themselves through the union, would secure the increases of pay which had been too long delayed. There is no doubt that hundreds of the police joined the union for this reason alone, and equally that increases of pay were long overdue. During my inquiries I came across cases of

men with families who before the pay was increased were in a pitiable condition. Here was another chance to scotch the snake. It is true that the Commissioner at the moment of the strike was working out a scheme of higher pay and pensions, but the tortoiselike movements and antediluvian methods of the Home Office department responsible for the financial arrangements of the Metropolitan Police . . . were doubtless not only well known to the men, but were magnified by their leaders. In view of the fact that the rates of pay were known to be in need of revision an immediate substantial temporary increase pending the elaboration of a permanent scheme would certainly have thinned the ranks of the union. It was a case where, in my opinion, the Commissioner would have been justified in metaphorically holding a pistol to the head or the tail of the Home Office."

There had been mutterings and threats for some time, but no serious step was feared by the authorities. On August 28, 1918, the superintendents of the force had met and reported that all was well. Two days later, while Sir Edward Henry was in Ireland and the force was under the control of Sir Frederick Wodehouse, what was in effect a general strike of the Metropolitan Police took place. A situation without parallel had arisen, and for a while the protection of London devolved upon the special police.

The demands of the strikers centred on the recognition of the union; the reinstatement of a constable named Thiel who had been dismissed for belonging to the union; and questions of pay and pension. Mr. Lloyd George, then Prime Minister, took the matter in hand. After the cynical manner of some Governments all the devoted services that had been rendered by Sir Edward Henry over so many years were forgotten. He was bundled out of office—"jettisoned," as he himself said—though someone afterwards remembered that he was the greatest police officer of the age, and he was awarded a baronetcy. The public did not know, and very few of those in the police service knew, that indirectly he was sacrificed because he attempted to put through a scheme for widows' pensions. It was on this point that his plan for a revision of pay was wrecked.

Sir Nevil Macready, then Adjutant-General, a soldier of great organising ability and much force of character, was called in. He had been promised the post before the war, but his views had now changed, and he was reluctant to leave the War Office.

Lord Milner attempted vainly to persuade him. Then according to Sir Nevil Macready, "Lord Milner went off to Downing Street, and about 5 p.m. I was summoned there by telephone. In the Cabinet room were the Prime Minister Lord Milner, Sir G. Cave (the Home Secretary), and a few more Cabinet Ministers. I took a chair opposite Mr. Lloyd George, and then the fun began. For close on two hours I resisted the pressure to take up the Commissionership. I suggested other men, younger and equally fit for the post—General Horwood or General Childs, to which the Prime Minister replied that it was necessary to have someone in whom the public would have confidence. . . . At last the Prime Minister expressed the opinion that it was of national importance that I should take the post. I asked him if he really meant that, and had not said it as an extra little bit of gratifying whitewash. He said he did, on which, of course I had nothing further to say, except that I would do my best to see the business through. The assent of the King was obtained through the telephone, and I left Downing Street in a very sad frame of mind about 7 p.m."

Mr. Lloyd George met the executive committee of the union, but with his weakness for making the best of both worlds, he left it to others to explain afterwards that he received them as police officers, and not as union delegates—a distinction that was to breed trouble. He agreed that men might join the union so long as no attempt was made to interfere with the discipline of the service. With unfortunate ambiguity he declared that he "could not in war time sanction the recognition of the police union," an expression which the men construed as meaning that recognition would be given after the war. Thiel was to be reinstated.³³ Other concessions were

Increases of pensionable pay by 13s. a week to all ranks, making the minimum pensionable wage 43s.

War bonus of 12s. a week.

War bonus grant of 2s. 6d. a week for each child of school age.

Pension of 10s. a week to widows.

£12 per annum for each child of school-going age given to the Police Orphanage to be continued.

Right to pension of £1 15s. 4d. a week at the end of twenty-six years' service.

An authorised organisation to represent the men to be established.

This for the moment settled the dispute. Sir Nevil Macready assumed the reins. He found many things that did not please him, but his strictures must be received with caution. If one is to accept his assertions unreservedly, the whole of the administration of the force from the Home Office to the Commissioner and superintendents had been grossly neglected. But something of the same sort has been said at the outgoing of many Commissioners. In particular, it was said of Henderson. There can be no question that in many ways the force had stood still. So did many other organisations during the war. It is only fair to remember that in those war-time days any Commissioner who attempted to force fresh and costly reforms over the heads of the Home Office and the Treasury might have had his hands very full.

The substance of Sir Nevil Macready's charges is that Sir Edward Henry was out of touch with the men, that there had been weakness and vacillation in carrying out the threat of dismissal of men who joined the union, and that an active and sterner policy would have remedied grievances and stifled discontent.

Indeed, the picture Sir Nevil Macready presents of Scotland Yard is one of chaos and inefficiency, and he registers his discontent in outspoken terms.³⁴ Yet ten years before a Royal Commission had found nothing radically wrong with the police. The ultimate test of police, the criminal statistics, pay tribute to Sir Edward Henry's regime. During four years of war the police had been engaged on special duties. There were 4,000 of their best men at the front; 1,500 more were at the dockyards. At headquarters there had been a ceaseless drain, and untrained youths, old men and women composed the larger part of the staff. The shock and disgrace of the strike had no doubt had its reaction on men worn out by constant work. With the impatience of a very competent man, Sir Nevil saw what had not been done, and did not realise how much had been done. Here is his opinion of the superintendents:

"The Commissioner was dependent for his information on the reports of his superintendents, men of unblemished character who had been promoted mainly for length of service and good conduct, but who in many instances were not capable of commanding and handling divisions which in some cases numbered 500 men.³⁵ Reports, too, were often coloured in order to give the impression that all was well in the various divisions. I have already mentioned that two days before the strike the

superintendents reported that there was no cause for uneasiness, which of itself proved the want of touch between the men and the higher officials. . . . The want of touch between the officials at Scotland Yard and the bulk of the force, together with the injudicious handling of the men in certain divisions, gave the opportunity for an insidious campaign in the direction of the formation of a union in order to compel attention to their grievances, real and fanciful, of the lower ranks of the force.

As Henderson had instituted District Superintendents, and as Warren had changed them to Chief Constables, so Sir Nevil Macready turned to this grade to link up the chain of responsibility. "An organisation had existed at Scotland Yard for many years which, if properly directed, would have supplied the link required between the headquarters of the force and the men. I refer to the Chief Constables, of whom there were three at the time I took over. The functions of these offices were very nebulous,³⁰ consisting, so far as I could ascertain, in sitting at Scotland Yard and dabbling with unimportant papers, with occasional visits to convenient police stations. So far as their utility to the force was concerned, they might have been non-existent. One of my first acts was to divide the Metropolis into four districts, placing a Chief Constable in charge of each district, where he would reside, have his office, and be responsible to the Commissioner for everything in the divisions of his area."

Sir Nevil Macready had the virtues, and perhaps some of the defects, of a masterful man. But he certainly had a sense of humour. Witness his story of his debut as Commissioner.

"On Wednesday, September 4, 1918, I installed myself at Scotland Yard. The building with its long dark passages could never exude cheerfulness, and at this particular time a settled atmosphere of nervousness and gloom seemed to have invested the place. Everybody was quite polite, but evidently not enthusiastic at the advent of a soldier, who, from the newspapers of a couple of weeks before, might justly have been imagined to combine the disrespect of constitutional methods of a Colonel Pride with the flabby incapacity of a Bourbois. Also the reign of a General who had been appointed Commissioner in days gone by, but within the memory of men still serving, was not remembered with enthusiasm at the Yard."

The new Commissioner wasted no time in getting to work. A number of high officials at Scotland Yard retired shortly after Sir Edward Henry. This afforded opportunities for

the introduction of new blood, and it became evident that Sir Nevil Macready intended to pick his men himself. General Horwood, who had been Provost-Marshal in France, was brought in as an Assistant Commissioner. When the rank of Deputy Commissioner was created a little later, he was the first to assume the post.³⁷ Colonel Laurie, of the Scots Greys, became a Deputy Assistant Commissioner³⁸ to reorganise the mounted police. Mr. Moylan, "an old friend," became Receiver of Police. Sir Basil Thomson relinquished his duties as Director of Criminal Investigations to Mr. Trevor Bigham and became responsible for the Special Branch only. Superintendent Olive became Chief Constable, and in a year or so was promoted to Deputy Commissioner, and received the honour of knighthood, the first man from the ranks to reach so high a post. One of the youngest superintendents, Mr. H. D. Morgan, also became a Chief Constable.³⁹

It is a little curious to find Sir Nevil Macready anxious to build up the mounted police, while he was contemptuous of the fact that superintendents still used antiquated horses and traps to supervise their divisions. "Many were the jokes I heard about these Victorian vehicles. If a superintendent intended to visit one of his stations, the groom or someone else would pass the word by telephone, and, of course, by the time the horse had been harnessed and had solemnly trotted over the intervening distance, everything was spick-and-span at the station on the great man's arrival."

But at least it was a step in the right direction that Chief Constables and superintendents were now provided with motor-cars. More comfortable furniture—even to the unwonted luxury of carpets—was provided for section houses. The Criminal Investigation Department was reinforced, and reorganised under area superintendents. Women police were officially appointed.

Sir Nevil and his lieutenants probed into every corner of police activity, and the Metropolitan Police had a thorough shake-up.

CHAPTER XVII

MORE TROUBLES

APART from the many important changes of method and organisation introduced by Sir Nevil Macready, he made some minor alterations which may be glanced at. He took away swords from superintendents and mounted men, "not from any desire to refute the suggestion that I should introduce military methods into the police, but simply because for mounted men a long baton is a far more efficient corrective for a mob; and for superintendents, as well as for other higher police officials, I consider a sword is out of place." He invented a uniform to replace the gorgeous and expensive full dress of the higher officials.

The theory that the Home Secretary was the really responsible chief of the Metropolitan Police was responsible for much red tape. Sir Nevil found that all promotions had to be sanctioned by the Home Office. "If I," he demanded, "by a stroke of the pen, have power to dismiss a man up to the rank of inspector, surely I can promote a constable without bothering the Secretary of State?" But it appeared that he could not. This point of form he succeeded in having abolished. A somewhat similar principle was involved when a constable on leave was fined by a magistrate for cruelty to an animal on his father's farm. Macready ordered him to be warned, and a letter was turned up, dated 1832, in which the writer "was directed by The Right Honourable the Earl of —, His Majesty's Secretary of State for Home Affairs, to inform the Commissioner that in the event of a member of the Metropolitan Police being convicted by the civil power, the question of his retention would be referred to the Right Honourable the Secretary for Home Affairs," and so on.

The energy of the new Commissioner might have led him into more troubles than did beset him during his short but eventful term of office had it not been for two men to whom he paid graceful tribute. One was Mr. W. H. Kendall, the Secretary

of Scotland Yard, who controlled the Civil Service staff, "a veritable walking encyclopædia of all things pertaining to the police"; the other was Sir James Olive, whose practical experience and shrewd common sense were much relied upon. For there is no doubt that at that time Sir Nevil Macready had much to learn about police work.

The settlement of the 1918 strike was only a temporary thing. There remained elements which all associated with the police knew might lead to an explosion at any time. Macready's chief business was to restore the police force to equanimity and calm. To this end he bent his efforts. Within a few days of taking office he drew up a scheme for a Representative Board which was to be elected by ballot from all ranks of the police. This scheme, after consultation with the Home Secretary, was put into force, and an inspector, five sergeants, and twenty-six constables were elected. Among these were all the members of the executive committee of the Police and Prison Officers Union, and the remainder were forthwith made members of the committee. Thus the Commissioner had to face the leaders of the Union, whether he would or not.

Trouble with a forceful Commissioner and equally forceful members of the Board was certain. Sir Nevil Macready declares that members of the Board dodged duty by holding meetings on trivial matters, and that the attitude of certain of its members to him was subversive of discipline. "Owing no doubt to the prevalent idea among some of the police that whatever they might do the union would protect them, there was about this time a regular epidemic of men absenting themselves from their beats for several hours, thus leaving the areas for which they were responsible unprotected, just when, owing to the demobilisation of the Army, considerable numbers of bad characters were returning to their former haunts. A carefully worded order was published drawing attention to these serious lapses from duty, and every case that afterwards occurred was dealt with by dismissal from the force, a severe punishment, but not too severe for men who for no excuse left the citizens for whose safety they were responsible and by whom they were paid, at the mercy of any gang of burglars."

Then in February, 1919, things reached a climax. According to Mr. J. H. Hayes, M.P., then a police sergeant and a member of the Representative Board, "the Commissioner gave some decisions to which the men's representatives could

not agree. They passed a resolution in these terms: 'We emphatically decline to agree with the interpretation of a certain Order that has been issued.' The Commissioner of Police, when he saw this resolution, became incensed that a disciplined body should have submitted such a resolution, and he sent for the deputation and told them that they had committed an act of indiscipline and that he should decline to receive them on any further occasion."

Macready, in fact, angrily resented being called a liar. The Home Secretary upheld the Commissioner in his attitude to the Board, and a new scheme was drawn up. By this fresh Representative Boards were to be constituted for each rank—constables, sergeants, and inspectors. It was held that the other scheme in which the various ranks were mixed together was unworkable, and calculated to interfere with discipline. The existing leaders of the men declared this to be a violation of the agreement made at the time of the strike settlement, and sought an interview with the Home Secretary from which nothing resulted. But the authorities now decided to take a firm stand against the union. An order was issued:

"In view of the interference of the National Union of Police and Prison Officers with the discipline of the service, and the inducement to members of the force to withhold their services, the Commissioner, with the approval of the Secretary of State, calls upon all members of the force to forthwith sever their connection with such union. The Commissioner would point out that any member of the force failing to comply with this direction will be liable to dismissal from the force.

"The Commissioner regrets that the acts of the Union of Police and Prison Officers should necessitate the issue of the above direction. Every reasonable suggestion for the improvement of the existing conditions of the force has been or is being investigated, and where investigation has disclosed a well-founded grievance, steps have been or are being taken to remedy matters.

"The Secretary of State has appointed a Committee to consider and report whether and what changes should be made in the method of recruiting for, the conditions of service, and the rates of pay, pension, and allowances of the police force of England, Wales, and Scotland. This Committee is actively engaged in its investigations. The Commissioner has appointed a committee of inquiry into certain allegations which have been brought to his notice in regard to the medical

treatment of officers and men by divisional surgeons. The committee is investigating the matters in question.

"In fact, no legitimate grievance or well-founded complaint remains, or will be allowed to remain, uninvestigated, and, where necessary, action has been or will be taken to put matters right, but the Union of Police and Prison Officers does not act with the authorities as was hoped. On the contrary, certain members of the union have set the authority of the Commissioner at defiance. Its actions make the proper maintenance of discipline in the force impossible. The Secretary of State, therefore, while giving the force assurances of sympathetic consideration in all matters touching its welfare, and while desiring to provide the force with all proper safeguards, has decided in the public interest that no member of the force, present or future, shall continue to be a member of or join the Union of Police and Prison Officers or any like association."

The gauntlet was thus thrown down, and the more fiery members of the union were not slow to pick it up. A *casus belli* was soon forthcoming. Notices for the nominations of candidates for the new Representative Boards were posted on the boards at the various police stations. On one of these, at Harefield, Middlesex, a constable named Spackmann, who was the local union official, wrote the words "No Action," and signed his name. "It is difficult," says Sir Nevil Macready, "to imagine a more serious breach of discipline, to use a mild term, than that of a constable who openly incites disobedience of orders issued under the authority of the Chief of the Force." The man was summoned before a Discipline Board and dismissed the force, and the dismissal was confirmed on appeal to the Commissioner.

There was, in fact, a boycott against the new scheme. Candidates were few, and the voting for them was indifferent. But some sort of representation was obtained. The appointment of the Committee to consider police grievances, of which Lord Desborough was chairman, did not placate the extremists. The agitation reached its height when it became known that a Bill was to be introduced in Parliament making membership of a trade union illegal for a police officer. Public meetings were held—one of these was in Trafalgar Square to protest against the dismissal of Spackmann, and by a curious touch of irony formal permission to use the Square for a public meeting had to be obtained from the Commissioner.

Much eloquence was expended by the police and their supporters, and there was a great deal of abuse of the Government and Sir Nevil Macready. Labour sympathisers were urged to take up the cause of the police.

A ballot was taken by the union on the question of a general police strike throughout the kingdom. Sir Nevil Macready feared that a strike might be precipitated at this time, and elaborate precautions were taken. With the sanction of the Government the following order was issued on May 30:

“TO CHIEF CONSTABLES AND SUPERINTENDENTS.

“ You will take steps to bring the attached order (A) to the notice of every officer and man under your command.

“ In the event of a strike in the Metropolitan Police, officers of the rank of sergeant and upwards must, if necessary, be on duty continuously and remain at their place of duty.

“ The occupation of station houses by the military will be merely for the protection of the buildings, and to free every available police officer for police duty. This should be fully explained to the force.

“ Lists of officers or men who have failed to parade for duty will be rendered to the Commissioner daily, and the Commissioner holds superintendents personally responsible that each case has been investigated, and that there is no doubt whatever that the officer or man has knowingly and wilfully withdrawn his services. The Commissioner will be at the Commissioner's office. Constant reports will be sent by telephone, telegraph, or orderly.”

“ A.

“ POLICE ORDER.

“ It having come to the knowledge of the Commissioner that a movement is on foot to induce the Metropolitan Police to again withdraw from their duty to the State, although the Commissioner is confident that the great majority of the force have no intention of so doing, he considers that in view of the events of August, 1918, it is necessary for him to make known clearly the consequences that will overtake any officer or man who may be led away by persons who place individual interests before those of the State.

“ It is to be distinctly understood by all ranks that an

officer or man, of whatever rank, who fails to report in the ordinary course of duty, or when called upon, will be forthwith dismissed from the force. Such officer or man will under no circumstances be permitted to rejoin the Metropolitan Police, and dismissal will result in the loss of all service counting towards pension. The Commissioner will be unable to accept excuses that men are unable to parade or carry on their work owing to intimidation.

"Officers and men will, if necessary, defend themselves by all legitimate means if interfered with in the execution of their duty."

This stern notice no doubt had its effect. At all events, no strike took place at this time, which Macready attributes to the intervention of "powerful labour influences." A day later Sergeant Hayes announced at a meeting in Hyde Park that 44,539 police had voted for a strike, and 4,324 against. Following this Sir Nevil Macready, who was not in the least afraid of doing unprecedented things, and to whom no one will deny courage, addressed a meeting of 3,000 police officers at the Queen's Hall. Bluntly, breezily, with humour and not without tact, he gave his version of the agitation. He laughingly admitted that he knew he had been called a "Prussian" and a "militarist," and touched at length on many points on which he had been criticised, and some on which he had not. From that very exhaustive speech one or two examples of his style may be given. On Representative Boards he said:

"There has been a great deal of criticism about the alterations in the methods of these Boards, and I will tell you quite frankly what passed through my mind. I used to see the deputation of the Board; whenever they wanted to see me they would come down and have a talk. While some men were perfectly courteous to me, as I hope I was to them, there were others who were the very reverse, and I came to the conclusion that if their attitude to me was such, what must be the attitude of the constables in the Board room to the inspectors and sergeants who were on the Board. In fact, I got it quite straight from a sergeant when I tackled him that there had been some hot air. Well now, my way of looking at it is this, that between—I don't care what the rank is, from myself downwards—but between the higher ranks and the lower ones, if there is hot air on matters of this kind, it will probably—and the men would be superhuman if it were not—it will

probably be carried into their duties. I mean in this way: Suppose that a sergeant and a constable have a real good row across the Board table and thoroughly lose their tempers, that sergeant would be hardly human if he clean forgot about it, and did not let it influence him in any way should he meet that man on duty. That is what I felt, and so, rightly or wrongly, I put to the Secretary of State the present organisation, and from what I can see, certainly with the inspectors and sergeants, I think the ranks they represent will find that they are doing more in their interests than under the old system. 'The Constables' Board is not at present what we can call an unqualified success, simply on account of its numbers, although during the last twenty-four hours I have had four more applications to join up, and I may say to you divisions who have not representatives on the Constables' Board that I suggest you should choose one in your own interests. I don't mind; if you don't want to have one, don't have him, but there are two very important questions up before these Boards. One is a proposal for promotion which affects us all, and the other the question . . . of the Provident Association."

He jogged the memory of the men on his attempt to improve the conditions of service. "Before I was with you a week a case was brought into my office of a man who was fined 3s. a week for two years. I called in Sir Frederick Wodehouse. I said to him: 'What is this?' and he said: 'It is the custom of the service.' 'Well,' I said, 'I think it is the most barbarous punishment I have ever seen.' I asked him if he had been in the hands of a moneylender. He told me he had not. Well, when I was young I was. And it seemed to me, looking at a punishment like that, after eight or nine months, when a man would get up in the morning feeling more or less merry and bright, then he would suddenly think: 'My God, I have got another year or more of this damned thing.'"

The Commissioner admitted a debt to Mr. Olive. "One other thing you talk about. I think some of you in the Commissioner's office will know how things have altered. I take no credit for that, except this, that I have had some experience of various Government departments and how they are worked, and how difficult a thing it is. Now I think it has been said, and I have no doubt that the day will come: 'Why should not a policeman be put in as Commissioner?' I was talking to our old friend Mr. Olive, and I said, 'My dear Olive, here

is this chair. For God's sake get into it if you like.' Well, Mr. Olive was not for the moment able to take it, and I think a tremendous lot of Mr. Olive. I will tell you why Mr. Olive could not tackle that very job. I will tell you why the Commissioner's job has little to do with the ordinary police detail. Three-quarters of his job is to get things done, and done as quickly as possible in the interests of his men in various Government departments—Home Office, Treasury, our own Receiver, and I don't know what else. It does not come in the ordinary course of work to anybody, right up to a Chief Constable, and that is why I only say that the day *may* come when you may have a Commissioner who comes from the ranks."

The speech was cleverly calculated. It conveyed an impression of bluff honesty and sincerity in the manner best designed to appeal to the men. "The cheers which rang through the hall when I finished, followed by 'He's a Jolly Good Fellow,' told me that the game was won. I was more than repaid for the insults of the past weary months . . . by the knowledge that I had gained the confidence of my men, and perhaps there was a suspicion of a quaver in my voice as I thanked the audience for their hearty cheers."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE LAST STRIKE

FOR a month or two labour troubles in other directions distracted attention from purely police affairs. But all concerned with constabulary matters knew that the decisive battle was yet to come. The Government had assumed the offensive with the Police Bill, which, if it passed, meant the inglorious and certain death of the Police Union. The Bill was strenuously opposed both inside and outside Parliament, but the resolution of the Government to force it through was apparent. There remained for the leaders of the police malcontents a last desperate measure—the declaration of another strike.

At Scotland Yard there was no disposition to minimise the critical nature of the situation. But it was believed that the men, for one reason and another, would hesitate before flinging themselves into open conflict once more. Macready's words and actions had not been without their effect. The worst that was anticipated was that 3,000 men might leave duty. Even should the number reach 5,000, it was considered that the protection of the Metropolis could be carried out without the assistance of the military. Sealed orders were sent to every division, and the Special Constabulary warned that they might be required at short notice.

On the morning of July 31 all the senior officers of the Metropolitan Police were aware that a crisis was imminent, and were within call. That evening the executive of the union held a meeting, and a strike was called throughout the country as a protest against certain clauses of the Police Bill.

That night the higher administrative officials of the force remained at Scotland Yard. By three o'clock the next morning 308 men had refused duty, and by six o'clock this number had increased to nearly a thousand, including an inspector and twenty-eight sergeants. During the afternoon the whole of these were peremptorily dismissed. On the whole, there was little disorder, although an attempt was made by some of the

strikers to force their way into a police station at Islington. They were driven out by a force collected by Chief Constable Olive.

To take the place of the strikers men on leave were hurriedly recalled, and in some few instances refused duty. The calculations of the Scotland Yard authorities on the number of disaffected men proved to have been worse than the reality, for the total number of men who went out was 1,083. All were dismissed. The average age of these men was 31·7 years, and their average length of service 9·3 years. "Many of the men who had joined in the strike," says Sir Nevil Macready, "had little sympathy with the union, but were led away through pure moral weakness. Of the 1,083 who withdrew from duty, probably not more than 20 per cent. were keen or active upholders of the union."

The strike fizzled out in the course of a day or two. It was ineffective from the beginning. The organisers had missed their tide. A strike earlier in the year might, from their point of view, have had greater results, and would almost certainly have been more strongly supported in London. The last dying effort of the Police Union had ended in unqualified defeat. A general order was issued to the force in which the Commissioner said:

"Certain divisions have passed through the ordeal without a single police officer having withdrawn from duty, a fact which reflects the greatest credit on all ranks. Other divisions have been less fortunate, but the Commissioner feels deeply that it is in those divisions where a comparatively large number of men withdrew from duty that the loyalty of those who were true to their salt was most sorely tried and deserving of highest praise. The Commissioner wishes to convey to all ranks serving to-day his deep appreciation of their evident determination to uphold their own self-respect and the reputation of the great force to which we belong, and he can assure them that they may rely on him to prove that appreciation by an equal determination to further their interests and their welfare."

The repercussions from this unfortunate episode lasted for many years. Although the strike was abortive in London, it attained serious dimensions in other forces, notably in Liverpool, where there was much rioting and heavy damage was done. Appeals to reinstate the men were firmly resisted. Sir Nevil Macready declared that if a single man was allowed to return to duty he would resign. He can scarcely be blamed; indeed

he did a great public service. He carried through an unpleasant task, careless of odium, without regard for sentimental considerations, for, as he saw it, the discipline of the force was in peril. Short of reinstatement, he did much to help the dismissed men.

So long afterwards as 1924 a debate took place in the House of Commons on the question of reinstatement. Many men who condemned the strike itself were sympathetic to the men. Mr. Hemmerde, K.C., expressed a very general point of view. "They had great grievances which ought to have made the country ashamed. They had grievances of which we were all ashamed. When bursting out in a misguided spirit following a great adventure, they go and do foolish things, is it not enough that they have suffered for four or five years? That is really what we have to consider. It is not justice I ask for. It is just mercy to a splendid body of men, and we have surely learned enough in our administration of justice during the last few years to realise that it is not only a duty but a privilege to be able to show mercy, not only to the broken in this world, but to those who are so occasionally misguided as to exceed their duty."

The Home Secretary, Mr. Arthur Henderson, explained away the promises made by members of the Labour Government while they were out of office, and pointed out that reinstatement would involve a money payment of some two million pounds. He agreed, however, to set up a committee of enquiry. The Committee sat, but the strikers are still outside the police service.

While this unrest had been agitating the police, a Committee appointed by the Home Office, with Lord Desborough as chairman, had been rigorously scrutinising the conditions of the police forces of the United Kingdom. The survey was a wide one, and men of all ranks gave their views on police administration and organisation. By July the Committee had issued the first part of their report, and by the end of the year the report was complete. Its suggestions remedied the great bulk of existing police grievances. Many of the points covered had reference to matters affecting the provincial forces, but it is interesting to note in passing that nationalisation was condemned on a somewhat moth-eaten formula reminiscent of those used to combat the formation of the Metropolitan Police:

"The adoption of direct central control of the police would be foreign to the constitutional principle . . . by which the preservation of law and order in this country is primarily the

function of the proper local authorities: it would alter the whole basis of the police system, and, in particular, would prejudice the intimate relations between the police and the localities where they serve which many experienced witnesses have regarded as one of the most desirable characteristics of the present system, and to which they attribute in great measure the happy relations which have existed between the police and the general public in this country."

The conclusion that the police were scandalously underpaid could scarcely have been resisted by any body of reasonable men. It is a reflection which strains credulity that for nearly a hundred years the police constable had been held to be on a level, so far as pay was concerned, with the unskilled labourer. An illuminating comparison was drawn by the Committee between the emoluments of a Metropolitan police constable of five years' service and those of certain other classes of the community. The constable, with allowances, had £3 7s. a week; a scavenger earned £3 7s. 6d.; an unskilled labourer received £3 8s.; a pavior made £4.

"Having regard to the nature of police work," reported the Committee, "and to the responsibilities . . . we consider the pay should not be assessed on the basis of that of an agricultural labourer or an unskilled worker, as has been the case."

Before the war a Metropolitan constable was paid from 30s. to 42s. a week. Certain increases had since taken place—mainly since the strike of 1918—and such things as a children's allowance and a war bonus had brought the total up by this time to from 55s. to 75s. This included the preposterously inadequate sum of 2s. as "rent aid." The Committee did not palter with the question. On this point they reported: "Taking all things into consideration, we recommend that the standard scale of pensionable pay for constables should be 70s. weekly on the constable's appointment on probation, rising by annual increments of 2s. to 90s. weekly, with two further long-service increments of 2s. 6d. We also recommend that all ranks be provided with a house or quarters rent free, or given allowances in lieu. . . ."

Similar proposals were made and acted upon in regard to the higher ranks of the service, and the increases were made retrospective to April, 1919. For the first time in its history the police force was given an official status equal to its responsibilities. The remuneration of the police officer was more than doubled as compared with pre-war conditions, and in some

cases practically trebled. Some alterations were suggested in the scale of pensions—an absolute right to pension of one-half pay after twenty-five years' service, and to two-thirds pay after thirty years' service.

It was the Desborough Committee that devised the machinery by which now the police as a body may ventilate their grievances. The Government, acting upon the Committee's suggestions, promptly established the Police Federation. In every police force in the country there are now three Branch Boards of the Federation elected by ballot and representing constables, sergeants, and inspectors. Delegates from these Boards are sent to a Central Conference each year, and from these Conferences are elected Central Committees of six members—two of whom must be members of the London police forces. These Central Committees sit separately, or together as a Joint Central Committee on matters of common interest. They are entitled to write or send deputations to the Home Secretary. By the Home Office regulations, "the Secretary of State may arrange for the holding of Police Councils for the consideration of general questions affecting the police, at which the Joint Central Committee or a deputation from that Committee may be invited to meet representatives of police authorities, Chief Officers of Police, and Superintendents, under the chairmanship of the Secretary of State or of an officer of the Home Department, or other person appointed for the purpose by the Secretary of State."

An eight-hour day, payment for overtime, annual leave of at least twelve days, free medical attendance, abolition of pay stoppage during sickness, and many other points in which the conditions of the service might be ameliorated or improved, were among the concessions put forward as reasonable. Some of these things already existed in the Metropolitan Police, but all were adopted.

Thus the police began to settle down. They had got all that they could reasonably expect, if not all that they asked for. Macready, inflexible disciplinarian though he was, was keenly and humanly alive to many things which he felt might be improved. In these cases he was alert to devise remedies. He felt that promotion went too much by seniority, and that younger men were needed in the higher ranks. Nor was he disposed to insist too rigidly on academic qualifications. "I would rather have a man who is a good leader and handler of men, but who might be inferior in his educational qualifications,

or even his police qualifications, than a man who is a brilliant educationalist or a police expert." He instituted a system by which any ambitious man might put down his name for consideration for promotion. He took a strong interest in sports and social qualifications designed to bring the men together, and was active in the encouragement of the charitable schemes of the force.

It is but fair to say that no Commissioner was ever confronted with more serious internal troubles than those with which Sir Nevil Macready had to cope. He had assumed control at some peril to himself, and had taken risks in dealing with a complicated situation at which he might well have paused. Other methods than those of the stern vigour which he employed might conceivably have been used by another type of man. But he never faltered, and at least he succeeded within the space of two years in bringing a disgruntled force to its old discipline and spirit.

As suddenly as he had come into the force, so suddenly, in April, 1920, he left it, at the instance of the Prime Minister, to take command of the forces in Ireland. "I took the opportunity," he wrote, "at this interview with Mr. Lloyd George, to impress upon him the necessity of appointing General Horwood to succeed me as Commissioner at Scotland Yard. It was not a year since the force had emerged from the strike of 1919, and though the spirit among all ranks was of the best, it was necessary that the Commissioner, at all events for some time to come, should be a man accustomed to handle a large body of men, as well as to identify himself with their interests, and I was afraid that when my back was turned the work of the last twenty months might be thrown away by the appointment, through interest or jobbery, of some man with no aptitude for, or experience of, that side of the work. The knowledge that my nominee would be accepted enabled me to bid farewell to my many friends at the Yard and in the force with a lighter heart than would otherwise have been the case, and many were the expressions of regret that poured in upon me when my departure became known. My regret at leaving Scotland Yard was to some extent tempered by the proud memory of having been associated with a force that may justly claim to be the finest police organisation in the world."

Brigadier-General Horwood, as I have said, had been Provost-Marshal of the British Expeditionary Force in France during the war. A large portion of his service had been spent in

association with Sir Nevil Macready, and the two men had much in common. After less than two years' police service therefore, he found himself chief of the most important police force in the world. But he had strong common sense, and his position was immensely strengthened by the promotion of Mr. (later Sir) James Olive to the post of Assistant Commissioner, and some time afterwards to Deputy Commissioner. Sir James Olive resigned at the end of 1925, after fifty-three years' service, and was replaced by Captain (now Admiral) Charles Royds, C.M.G., R.N., an appointment which created some criticism.

Sir William Horwood has carried on the administration of the Metropolitan Police with the same regard for the well-being of the men and with an equal discipline to that exacted by his predecessor. Some clashing of view shortly after his appointment led to the resignation of Sir Basil Thomson, and another of Sir Nevil Macready's former staff officers, General Sir Wyndham Childs, came to Scotland Yard to take charge of the Criminal Investigation Department. Time brings its revenges. For years and years there had existed the deepest prejudice among the public and the police against the "militarisation" of the force. To-day, among the highest ranks at Scotland Yard are to be found eight military officers and one naval officer. Yet it should be said that, whatever may be held against the principle, never has the control of the Metropolitan Police been more supple and flexible in many respects than it is at the present day.

A close overhaul has been made of the administration, and trained police officers have, where possible, been removed from extra-police duties to spheres more fitted to their experience. For example, ex-service men and pensioners are now employed in the Lost Property Office, and to some extent in the Public Carriage Department and Criminal Records Office. The whole of the clerical staffs of Scotland Yard have been reviewed and modern office methods and mechanical labour, by which clerical labour could be reduced, introduced.

Close attention has been paid to the provision of quarters for married police, a problem which the post-war shortage of houses rendered acute. For years past the section houses for single men have been almost empty, for it is a singular fact that in these days few men remain single after they join the force. Year after year the Commissioner has made plaintive comment on this point, as witness this from his report of 1924:

"Difficulties connected with the housing problem, though not quite so acute as during the previous few years, still give cause for anxiety. In a force of such magnitude officers and men are constantly leaving on expiration of service, and new entrants' transfers from one division to another, etc., are numerous. The dearth of any sort of housing accommodation necessitates many of these men travelling backwards and forwards between their homes and their stations for prolonged periods (often twelve or eighteen months or more) at great inconvenience to themselves and to the disadvantage of the inhabitants of the districts where they perform duty, who necessarily must lose some part of the services of the men occupied in such travelling.

"As previously pointed out, very little help is given by the only bodies who really could assist—*i.e.*, the Local Authorities—who for the most part have declined to allocate to the use of the police some of the houses erected by them. Apparently they think all houses required for police occupation should be erected by the police authorities—a thing quite impossible of achievement if for no other reason than the want of sufficient funds. Everything that can be possibly done to mitigate the inconvenience involved is being done, but it is to be feared that a long time will yet elapse before the difficulty is entirely surmounted. . . . If more money could be made available for the building of police tenements an enormous boon would be conferred upon the married men, many of whom are either travelling long distances daily, or living in undesirable conditions in inner London."

Post-war economy had its reaction on the force. The usual automatic increase in numbers had been suspended since the outbreak of war, and there had been a reduction of 5 per cent. in the establishment in accordance with the recommendations of the Geddes Committee. In 1923 the Commissioner reported: "At present the beats are greatly depleted. In most cases the men are patrolling two, and frequently three or four beats, instead of one. This is bad not only from the point of view of the public, but also administratively, as it makes it very difficult for the officers properly to supervise their men." Again, it was pointed out in 1924 that "the number of constables available for beats, fixed points, and patrol beats in the Metropolis, after providing for the naval and military stations . . . and for traffic and other duties such as station reserves, relieving for leave, etc., was 9,196."

No Commissioner has ever been immune from attack or complaints. Sir William Horwood has not proved an exception. In 1922 he observed: "Attacks have been made upon the police by some of the less reputable journals. The writers in these journals seem to be obsessed with the idea that blackmail and the acceptance of bribes are not uncommon, and that the higher authorities neglect to deal with offenders. Some go so far as to attribute blackmail to officers highly placed in the force. When they are invited to supply information which would enable enquiry to be made into these reckless and often wicked charges, the reply is that they cannot either disclose the source of their information or give details. Nothing could be more unfair and exasperating to the members of the force." Two years later it was revealed that complaints against individual officers were growing less each year. The Commissioner pointed out that "every complaint that is received, whether duly authenticated by the writer's signature or of anonymous origin, is carefully investigated, and should it be found that an officer complained of is to blame, the necessary action is taken to bring him to account for his misbehaviour or neglect and to afford satisfaction to the complainant.

"Most of the anonymous letters received are connected with street betting, gaming, etc., and for the most part emanate from some persons who have some axe to grind. Far the greater number of these communications are the outcome of spite, often against some individual who apparently is doing more trade than the writer, but far more frequently against police officers deputed to deal with these offences. These officers are always special objects of attack by aggrieved touts and bookmakers who have been apprehended and dealt with for transgressions of the law. Bribery and corruption are freely imputed, the end in view being to have the officers removed to other duties because they have apprehended the persons complaining, or have learnt too much about their haunts and habits. The officers employed on these duties are very carefully selected for the purpose."

One of the most dramatic episodes in the domestic history of Scotland Yard was the attempt to murder Sir William Horwood, an attempt that as nearly as possible succeeded. On the evening of November 9, 1922, he was expecting a box of chocolates from a relative to mark his birthday, which had occurred two days previously. By a singular chance a box of chocolates did arrive, and while he was preparing to attend

ne Lord Mayor's banquet he ate one or two. Almost immediately afterwards he collapsed and had to be taken to St. Thomas's Hospital, where only the most strenuous exertions on the part of eminent doctors saved his life. It was a little unfortunate that his subordinates should have thought it wise to intimate publicly at first that he had broken down and was suffering from a heart attack. A day or two later it was officially admitted that he had been poisoned by chocolates containing arsenic, and that poisoned chocolates had also been sent to two other high officials of police.

A Balham postmark afforded the detectives their first clue. The search ultimately centred on a man named Tatam, who had been in an asylum from 1914 to 1919, and who suffered from the delusion that the police had refused to protect him. He was arrested, but upon trial at the Old Bailey was found to be mad, and was sent to Broadmoor as a lunatic.

The appreciation by the public of the services of the police received striking tangible expression at the conclusion of the portive general strike of 1926. A fund, initiated by *The Times*, reached a figure in the immediate neighbourhood of a quarter of a million pounds, contributed by all classes of the community. This fund will be administered as a national trust for the benefit of the police of Great Britain as a whole. The trustees include the Home Secretary, and the Secretary for Scotland. Some criticism, both inside and outside the police, was made on the assumption that it was undignified and inadvisable to accept what was described as a gigantic tip. It has been overlooked that a precedent exists in the Conalescent Homes Fund, which was originally raised as a testimonial to the police for their conduct during the Trafalgar square riots of 1888.

BOOK II

THE ORGANISATION OF SCOTLAND YARD

CHAPTER XIX

THE EMBRYO POLICEMAN

THERE are many veterans still serving in the Metropolitan Police who have acquired a knowledge of their profession simply by experience. For before 1907 there was no training in the strict sense for the police service. That blunders were not more common than they were among officers not only frequently illiterate, but almost utterly ignorant of legal principles and the elementary technicalities of police work, is a cause for marvel. True, Sir Richard Mayne had started what was dignified by the title of a Candidates' Preparatory Class in 1839, but this really meant nothing except that the recruits were under some kind of supervision by a sergeant while for a week or two they were put through a course of foot drill. Some kind of care was taken that they were physically fit and of good character, but beyond that little was done to fit them for their calling.

The late Chief Inspector Cavanagh, who joined in 1855 expressed the belief that nine out of ten in his time adopted the police force as a living through "stress of weather." This in spite of the reply of an Assistant Commissioner to an applicant who "as a last resource" asked for the position of constable, that "the Metropolitan Police was not a refuge for the destitute."

An instance of the "training" of 1855 is afforded by Cavanagh. The sergeant in charge of the class suffered from gout. For three days and nights a candidate was ordered to attend upon him. He had to keep two buckets filled with hot bran in which the sergeant might plunge his feet, "he making use of the most terrible language he could lay his tongue to the while. . . . I felt very sorry for the poor

fellow, but who, at the age of nineteen years, under the circumstances could feel that he had done a good thing in entering the Metropolitan Police for a living?"

Turning to conditions thirty years later, we find them almost unaltered. Henderson had made some attempt to improve the standard of education in general among the ranks of the force, but selection and preliminary training remained as before. The age-limit was then between eighteen and thirty-five, but as no birth certificate was required, men both younger and older slipped through. Fifteen shillings a week was allowed to candidates to support themselves, and they were lodged in private boarding-houses in Westminster, some of which were not models of cleanliness. The recruits paid for their own food.

In 1887 Sir Charles Warren put an Assistant Chief Constable in control of the Candidates' Section House—then located at Kennington—but this gentleman's duties do not appear to have been arduous. In point of fact there was still but one sergeant in charge of the recruits, who varied in number from a dozen to eighty-one, but his principal work would seem to have been the maintenance of order, and to act as caterer. Drill was still the be-all and end-all of police instruction. The men, however, were housed and fed under much more reasonable conditions than formerly.

"When I was at Scotland Yard," said Sir Howard Vincent, "I considered that the training of police recruits, limited as it then was to elementary drill and patrolling in company with an old constable, who more often than not taught him the objectionable tricks of the beat, was very defective and very inadequate. On the other hand, the young constable, anxious to do right, of course could go and ask the station inspector or his sergeant his opinion upon what his action should be on any moot point or under any given circumstances, and it is only natural to suppose that the answer was not always very encouraging to the police student." One illiterate constable was set to write an essay on the Aliens Act. "Aliens," he wrote, "come from all over the world, and some of them from Devonshire." An inspector who had reported adversely on his education was a Devonshire man.

There was always, of course, the "White" Book, or Instruction Book, a copy of which was issued to every constable, and which he sometimes read, and sometimes did not. Vincent's "Police Code" was the first attempt to present the

policeman's duty simply and lucidly. Then came "Duty Hints," an admirable and well-arranged précis of the Instruction Book, which might be carried in the pocket.

Minor changes were made by Sir Edward Bradford, but it was not till Sir Edward Henry established Peel House in 1907⁴⁰ that any seriously considered scientific system of police education may be said to have been adopted. Peel House has accommodation for between 200 and 300 recruits, each of whom has his own separate cubicle. There are big classrooms, scrupulously kept dining-rooms and kitchens, a billiard-room, a library, a rifle range, and a gymnasium—everything that can conduce to comfort and efficiency. An adequate weekly sum is allowed to each candidate, out of which he pays his own very moderate mess-bill. Thirty officers under a superintendent constitute the instructional staff, and the administration is under the control of a Deputy Assistant Commissioner.

The man ambitious for a police career has nowadays to show himself competent. He is not taken on trust, even for admittance to the police school. The primary qualifications for a police candidate are officially laid down. He has—

1. To be over twenty and under twenty-seven years of age.
2. To stand *clear* 5 feet 9 inches, without shoes or stockings.
3. To be able to read and write, and to show reasonable proficiency in writing from dictation and simple arithmetic.
4. To be generally intelligent.
5. To possess a strong constitution equal to the performance of Police Duty, and to be free from any bodily complaint.
6. To be a British subject and of pure British descent.

The candidate has to explain what he has done since leaving school, and the steps he has taken to keep up and improve his education. Then, character and physique settled, he appears before a Selection Committee which is composed of a civil servant attached to the staff at Scotland Yard, a Chief Constable, and a Superintendent. They consider whether his intelligence and education are up to the standard required, and incidentally form some judgment as to his temperament and

other qualities. If he gets by he is allowed to go to the police school for a further test.

Nothing is taken for granted by the school authorities. They also examine the man, mainly from an educational point of view. If they think that a little polishing in this respect is demanded they hold him to academic studies for a while. Not until he is satisfactory in this way does he become a student of police work. Then for eight weeks the elements of the profession are explained to him and he has to show that he has gripped them. If he is a little slow in some subjects he is held back for a second chance. No one is given a third, and the average time occupied in passing through the school is three months.

Then the candidate goes back to the Selection Committee. If they are satisfied with his progress he is taken before the Commissioner and sworn in as a probationary constable. He is posted to a division, where he has to continue his studies for a number of hours each week under an inspector. At the end of three months he is again examined, and a report goes in to Scotland Yard on his aptitude for police work, his progress, manner, and deportment. Still another three months and he has to go back to Peel House for a final examination. At any one of these stages he may be "ploughed" for one reason or another, and told that he is unsuitable. Not more than 5 per cent. of the men who endeavour to enrol are ultimately accepted, even as probationary constables. The figures in one year recently were 17,718 candidates, of whom 935 were sworn in. No constable is permanently appointed to the force till he has undergone a year's probation.

These rigorous precautions have undoubtedly helped to enhance the prestige of the service. There are now many police officers of great educational accomplishments and social qualifications, and although they may be few, the fact that men of such a type are attracted to the force shows a tendency to regard the police service as a career by men of superior attainments.

The constable is not like a soldier. He has to act most often on his own initiative and responsibility. The man who may be seen, placid and unemotional, pacing a beat at the regulation two and a half miles an hour, has in these days to know much before he is trusted alone on duty. He has to be ready to act decisively and firmly at an instant's notice, to solve on the spur of the moment some intricate problem of

public order, to know the law, so that he may arrest a person on one occasion, and let him go upon another, to act as guide or consultant to the public, to aid at a fire, to capture a burglar.

At Peel House the embryo policeman works from nine in the morning till half-past seven at night learning the thousand and one laws, written and unwritten, that the policeman has to obey. In cold black and white the syllabus, of which even a summary would occupy many thousand words, looks formidable. It is designed both to test and to teach.

Every contingency that a constable may have to face, from dealing with insecure cellar flaps to taking a dying declaration, to action in cases of riot, and the privileges of ambassadors, is explained. He is shown how to make a report, and warned of the perils of making erasures or tearing leaves from his pocket-book. He is drilled, given gymnastic exercises, taught the main principles of ju-jitsu, and given instruction in the use and mechanism of pistols. The unobtrusive marks to be placed on windows, doors, walls, shutters, and padlocks is made clear to him. He is told what to do should there be a sudden death in the street, should the roadside subside, should a street collision take place, should a gas explosion occur, should he be assaulted. He is initiated into the mysteries of scores of Acts of Parliament.

All the while he is watched shrewdly and keenly. His quickness, his observation, his accuracy, are noted. Hour after hour, day after day he is reminded: "Remember the honour of the service will be in your hands; you are to serve, not to harass, the public."

These young men are craftily instilled with the self-confidence so necessary to the policeman. The staff patiently discriminate between nervousness and stupidity, and there are practical object lessons to show them how things should be done. For instance, there is the little drama of the shop-keeper, the thief, and the constable. Three instructors adopt these roles. The members of the class see everything for themselves as the event might happen, from the robbery to the procedure at the police station and the police court. The reason for every action taken is explained. Then the men are called upon one by one to deal with the case.

The importance of the relations between police and public are continually dwelt upon. One of the senior officers gives lectures on a number of subjects, including, among others: Truthfulness, civility, command of temper, tact, discretion

forbearance, avoidance of slang terms, the liberty of the subject, and offences against discipline.

An intelligent man who has passed through Peel House has fully enough elementary knowledge of law and police to carry him through the first stages of his career, and he acquires experience rapidly till he becomes the complete policeman ready to deal quickly and efficiently with any trouble by which he may be confronted.

Affirmation as a constable is made before the Commissioner, who usually takes the opportunity of giving a few words of advice. The constable's oath is:

"I, —, being appointed a constable of the police force of the Metropolitan Police District, do solemnly, sincerely, and truly declare that I will well and truly serve our Sovereign Lord the King in the office of a constable, and that I will act as a constable for preserving the peace, and preventing robberies and other felonies, and apprehending offenders against the peace, and in all respects to the best of my skill and knowledge discharge the duties of the said office faithfully according to law."

Thus the young constable starts off with a wage of 70s. a week, and the certainty, subject to good conduct, of a full pension at the end of thirty years. Even if he does not succeed in getting promotion—he may at any time apply to have his merits considered and enter for a qualifying examination—his pay will go up till it reaches the constable's maximum of £5 a week. If he has ambitions and capacity he may aspire to the position of Chief Constable, with a salary of £1,000 a year. There are many special posts for which extra pay is given.

He will work eight hours a day, with one day off a week, and with annual leave ranging from twelve days for a constable to twenty-one days for a chief inspector. He is given free quarters or an allowance for rent that in the case of a married constable amounts to 12s. a week. There is free medical attendance, and reasonable sick leave. Many flourishing social institutions are at his disposal, particularly if he, like so many men of the force, has athletic leanings. There are well-managed athletic associations, and football, cricket, boxing, lawn tennis and kindred sports are encouraged. The Metropolitan Police hold many athletic championships and records. At Imber Court, Esher, there exist all the facilities of a well-managed country club. A minstrel troupe, brought about many years ago by Sir James Olive, has put many thousands

of pounds to the funds of police charities. There is a concert party, and of course the divisional bands. Frequently there are social entertainments—whist drives, dances, and concerts—at Peel House and other places where an evening may be pleasantly spent.

On the other hand, there are certain rules which he must be careful to observe. Among the conditions of service are:

“Every constable is to devote his whole time to the Police service. He is not to carry on any trade, nor can his wife be allowed to keep a shop.

“He is to serve and reside wherever he is appointed.

“Such debts owing by him as the Commissioner directs to be paid shall be paid forthwith.

“He shall not resign nor withdraw himself from his duties unless allowed to do so in writing by the Superintendent of the Division, or by the Commissioner; or unless he shall have given to his Superintendent one month’s previous notice in writing. If he resign or withdraw without such leave or notice he is liable to forfeit all pay due and to be charged before a magistrate.

“Each police constable is liable to immediate dismissal for unfitness, negligence, or misconduct, independently of any other punishment to which by law he may be subject. The Commissioner may also remove him from the service by dismissal or otherwise, without assigning any reason. If he be dismissed the police force the whole of his pay then due is forfeited.”

If the young constable is single he will be sent to a section house. It is not officially admitted, but it is quite probable that the austerities of section-house life are among the reasons that induce most constables to plunge into matrimony. For here the constable is always under discipline. There are recreation rooms, libraries, billiard tables, baths, drying rooms, good food and many conveniences. But there are also drawbacks. Each officer must be in the section house by a certain time; he must be rigorously tidy. He has his narrow cubicle, his locker, and they must be kept just so. If the places are clean, they are also bare. Every sound can be heard in the cubicles, and the exigencies of the service demand that men should be in and out, going or coming from duty, frequently—to the irritation of men trying to snatch sleep. Sir Nevil Macready perceived that section houses were not all they might be, and ameliorated conditions to an extent, but they

are still not very attractive places. "Single men in barracks don't grow into plaster saints."

The educational qualifications for promotion are not too exacting.⁴¹ A constable who aspires to a sergeant's stripes will be tested in reading and copying manuscript, writing, spelling, elementary English composition, the first four rules of simple arithmetic, and in simple money sums. The examination for promotion from sergeant to inspector includes advanced English composition, simple and compound arithmetic, including English and metrical weights and standards, vulgar fractions and decimals.⁴²

Certificates of proficiency in such subjects as first aid and foot drill are insisted upon, and indeed for some reason an inspector seeking promotion to a subdivisional inspectorship must possess a knowledge of horsemanship. But, not unnaturally, most importance is attached to the technical examinations, which are conducted by police officers of experience. Some conception of their scope is afforded by the following typical questions at the first promotion examination:

What are you directed to do by General Orders when a prostitute is charged with larceny from a man in a cab?

What is homicide, and when is it excusable or justifiable?

To whom are gilt-and-green enamel passes issued, and what do they entitle the holder to do?

What are the powers of search by police under Section 66 of the Metropolitan Police Act, 1839?

One of the first things with which a young officer is required to acquaint himself is the interior economy of a police station. This is strictly businesslike. There are one or two rooms set apart for the men of the Criminal Investigation Department; a station officer's office, where the general business of the station is transacted; a large charge-room, where prisoners and witnesses remain while a charge is being investigated; a detention-room for the custody of persons before they are formally charged; a room for the divisional surgeon; another for the matron, who has to attend to and search female prisoners; a small waiting-room—in some stations two—for the public; and a parade shed where the men assemble when going upon duty. There are a number of cells, which varies with the size of the station.

The cells open on to a passage guarded by a locked door. The keys are held always in the possession of the station officer.

Every precaution is taken that no harm shall come to a prisoner, that he shall be subjected to as little discomfort as possible, and to guard against escape. An electric bell will summon the station officer. If it is necessary to place more than one person in a cell, the number is always three or more for reasons that will be obvious. Special cells, with wooden floors raised at one end, are used for drunken persons.

Every division is split up into subdivisions in which there are one or more police stations. Subdivisions are cut up into sections and sections into beats. The superintendent holds sway over the division, and he has at his elbow a chief inspector, who, in addition to acting as his lieutenant and taking control in his absence, oversees that the education of recruits goes on during the first year of their service, and has charge of all divisional equipment and stores. The subdivisional inspector has charge of a specific area and supervises the work of all officers in his subdivision. All reports pass through his hands.

Ordinary inspectors perform an eight-hour tour of duty, and usually act in pairs. One will be outside for four hours moving among the sergeants and men of the district, while his colleague remains on duty at the station. At the end of that time they change over. A station sergeant is a kind of deputy inspector, and his work is similar. The ordinary sergeant is in charge of a section of ten or twelve beats, and has to post his men and visit them from time to time. He answers for the conduct and discipline of men under his charge.

It is the constable's business to patrol his beat at the regulation two and a half miles an hour, and to handle as best he may any matter demanding his interference. The length of a beat varies in different places, though as a general rule they are longer in the outer area than in the inner. There is a studied irregularity in the direction that may be taken by a constable, and the times at which he may arrive at certain points are varied occasionally. Thus none but his superior officers know where he will be at a given time.

CHAPTER XX

RIVER POLICE

IF absence of crime be held the best test of the efficiency of police, then the Thames Division holds an enviable record. For it is long since there have been any serious robberies on the Thames, although for a time, during and after the war, there was an increase of pilfering of which the London Chamber of Commerce complained to the Home Secretary.

The Thames Division may claim to be the father of the London police, for it was an organised and efficient body for thirty years before the Metropolitan force was created. Indeed, it was in all probability the success of this body, which was designed by Patrick Colquhoun—although John Harriot, who became one of its first magistrates, declared that he suggested the scheme to Colquhoun—that gave additional weight to the views of Colquhoun when the scheme of the Metropolitan Police was considered.

In the closing years of the eighteenth century the river, the great commercial highway of the time, was without a single police guard boat. Plunder was open, unabashed, and systematised to such an extent that there were on shore 550 refineries carried on with stolen sugar. Ships, warehouses and lighters were never safe. Practically every man employed on the river was deep in the traffic, not excepting the Customs officers. Half a million a year, it was estimated, was the least cost of their depredations. There even existed a club composed of river plunderers which levied contributions for suborning evidence, employing counsel, and paying the expenses of any thief who should, by some strange chance, be brought before a court of justice.

The impudence and audacity of these rogues was limitless. Colquhoun graded them in classes under their nicknames.

There were desperate and armed "river pirates," who plundered vessels in the night. "An American vessel . . . was boarded in the night, while the captain and crew were

asleep, by a gang of river pirates, who actually weighed the ship's anchor, and hoisted it into their boat with a complete new cable, with which they got clear off. The captain, hearing a noise, came upon deck at the moment the villains had secured their booty, with which they actually rowed away in his presence, impudently telling him that they had taken away his anchor and cable, and bidding him good morning."

"Night plunderers" were gangs of depraved watermen who looted lighters with the connivance of watchmen. In other cases lighters were cut adrift and pillaged of their entire contents. "Light horsemen" and "heavy horsemen" devoted themselves to the robbery of West Indian ships. An arrangement was made with the mates of some of these vessels by payment of from thirty to fifty guineas to allow the plunder of the ships at night. "The ships subject to this species of depredation were generally known from the character of the mates or revenue officers who were on board, and were denominated *Game Ships*, where the aquatic labourers, called *Lumpers*, would on every occasion agree to work without wages, and even solicit their employers to be preferred on these terms, trusting to a general license to plunder for their remuneration."

"Game watermen" conveyed the booty ashore, and were at times used to dispose of it. "Game lightermen" were in charge of the barges into which the ships were unloaded, and they helped themselves almost at will to the goods confided to their care. "Mud-larks" prowled about under ships' quarters at low tide alert for any chance of pilferage. "Scuffle hunters" posed as labourers on the quays and wharfs and plundered indifferently where they could. The mainspring of the whole nefarious trade were the "copemen" or receivers. "Those denominated *Copemen* formed the junto of wholesale dealers, who were accustomed to visit ships on their arrival for the purpose of entering into contract with such revenue officers or mates as they had formerly known or dealt with, and such others as they could by means of friendly officers seduce to their views. . . . It was their custom to afford assistance wherever such articles were to be procured by providing *Black Straps* (bags dyed black) to contain sugar, and calculated to stow easily in the bottom of boats, without being discovered on account of the colour. They also procured bladders with wooden nozzles for the purpose of containing rum, brandy, geneva, and other liquors, and furnished boats to convey the plunder from the ships during the night."

"Nor," adds Colquhoun, "can it be a matter of wonder that such pervading mischiefs should have prevailed when it is known that above 5,000 individuals, employed in various stationary situations upon the River, have with a very few exceptions been nursed from early life in acts of delinquency of this nature."

This was the situation when the West Indian merchants, provoked beyond endurance, appealed to Colquhoun to devise a plan for their protection. He drew up a "Treatise on the Commerce and Police of the River Thames." On the model he there proposed a "Marine Police Institution" was formed in July, 1798.

Colquhoun himself was appointed superintending magistrate of the new body, and John Harriot, "zealous, able, and humane," became the resident magistrate. There was at first no definite authorisation of the force by the Government, although it was looked upon with benevolent approval, and its expenses seem to have been defrayed by the merchants themselves. But in a year or so it was taken under the wing of the Government by an Act of Parliament.

Its headquarters were at Wapping, and it had a permanent staff of forty-one officers, surveyors, constables, and water officers. This was augmented as occasion demanded by other officers temporarily employed, which brought the total to 221. These men were largely ex-naval men, strictly supervised. Two boats, each with a surveyor in charge of a couple of constables, were always on duty, and patrolled from London Bridge to Blackwall. They had stringent instructions to maintain vigilance and to act with vigour in apprehending evil-doers; they were armed with cutlasses, which were only to be shown in extremity. Guards were formed on the quays, and lighters were loaded under the surveillance of the marine police. Within a few years the orgy of robbery was not merely stemmed, but almost abolished.

When the position of the Thames Police was legalised, the magistrates received judicial as well as executive powers. Each of them received £600 a year. Harriot, however, who had no idea of hiding his light under a bushel, looked upon himself as the autocrat of the service. "There is a very tight duty to perform, and there is some difficulty in keeping the men to do it," he told a committee in 1816. "It requires the active superintendence of one magistrate to keep the system in a state of vigour; and I trust I may be allowed to say, after

eighteen years' experience, that I am the main keystone of the plan. My superintendence of it is gratuitous. When I speak of the active superintendence of one magistrate, I mean that the superintendence must be performed by one, and by one only."

Harriot either died or had resigned before the Metropolitan Police swallowed up the Thames force. It would have probably broken his heart to have abandoned his executive functions.

Among his successors was Captain Richbell, an old sea captain, and Ballantine, the father of Serjeant Ballantine. The latter wrote:

"For two or three years previously to my call to the Bar I resided with my father at the official residence of the Thames police at Wapping. . . . Here, but shortly before, existed Execution Dock, where the bodies of pirates might be seen dangling, hung in chains. . . . My father was the senior magistrate, and upon him devolved the organisation and management of the police attached to the office. . . . Their duties were confined to the river, and to the localities adjacent to its shores. These included districts inhabited by very lawless classes, and as I frequently accompanied the officers while upon duty, I had many opportunities of witnessing their conduct, and the power they possessed was considerable. I have seen the most serious disturbances quelled in a few minutes by the presence of two or three of them, and I do not remember any occasion when they received serious injury. They knew the localities well and the character of the people who inhabited them, and were thus enabled to trace offenders with very marked success. They were well and kindly managed by my father, who possessed great influence over them, and they always resorted to him in cases of difficulty. Their discipline though strict, gave them much independence, which was certainly of service when speedy action was required."

On the last day of August in 1839 the Thames Police became a division of the Metropolitan Force. The Police Office became a court and was transferred to Arbour Square in Stepney, the old office remaining as a police station. The magistrates became judicial functionaries.

From that time there is little to record beyond work well done and crime kept persistently in check. At first the duties of the division took them only as far up the river as London Bridge. This was extended to Fulham at some later period. For some reason it halted there for many years, and in the eighties the

land police of the adjoining divisions were forced to institute a spasmodic boat patrol at week-ends during the summer months from Fulham to Teddington. Soon after Sir Edward Henry became Commissioner the jurisdiction of the river police was extended. It now reaches for thirty-five miles from Dartford Creek to Teddington. A couple of steam launches reinforced the rowing boats about 1885—it took a long time for the utility of these craft to become apparent to the official mind, and even at that they were so small, according to the report of the superintendent of that year, as to be “only fit for fine weather and smooth water.”

The Thames Division is the smallest in the Metropolitan Police, numbering only slightly more than 200 men—scarcely more than it did forty years ago, although, of course, the motor-boats now used have added mobility, and enabled patrols to become much more effective. The men of the division are all watermen of experience. Some have been in the Navy, others in the Mercantile Marine, others have been on the river itself. When they join the police they each have a period of shore duty, but once attached to the division they are rarely transferred.

They have a comprehensive knowledge of the river. They know every eddy, every trick and twist of the tide; they know on any given day what boats are in the river, be they barges or liners; and they know the men who work them.

There are five stations—at Wapping, Waterloo Pier, Barnes, Blackwall, and Erith. Each of these controls a section of the river, and the river is patrolled by boats putting forth from them at various hours, each with two men and a sergeant. They have many duties to perform in their vigil over the river and its banks. It is laid down in the police instructions that they must, among other things—

Secure drifting barges and inform owners.

Detect smuggling, illegal shipbuilding, or illegal fitting out for service in a foreign State.

Report damaged cargoes or food, and offences against the Port of London Authority's bye-laws.

Arrest any drunken person navigating a boat.

Detect cases of navigation without sufficient free-board below Battersea Bridge.

Inform harbour-master of vessels sunk or dangerous wreckage adrift.

Report wrecks to Lloyd's.

There have been detectives attached to the division since 1873, and although few in numbers, they have a very complete knowledge of the special types of crime and criminals associated with the river. But for them the purple patches are few. It is long since any crime beyond petty theft has engaged their services.

One of the most famous of river thieves was a man the police knew as "Slippery Jack." He had done very well out of a long-continued course of theft until he was laid by the heels. His methods were distinctive. Almost naked and with his skin lavishly greased, he would slip aboard any likely looking craft at night in search of plunder. If he were disturbed he would dodge away, his greased skin aiding him to elude anyone who attempted to seize him. He was tracked down one evening to Blackfriars, where he backed his boat into mid-stream and turned at bay with a vicious sheath-knife. Only after a fierce struggle, in which the police did not escape scot-free, was he overpowered and arrested. His exploits cost him ten years' penal servitude.

There is the germ of a detective story in a solution of a case of supposed murder that happened in August, 1897. The body of a naked man was found floating in the river near the Tower Bridge. A line was woven tightly round the body, arms, and neck, and a doctor stated that the body must have been in the water about three weeks, that death was due to strangulation, and that he thought it impossible for the man to have tied the rope round himself, though it must have been tied before death.

"The body was identified by a woman as that of her husband, a man of some notoriety, who had shot Woolf Joel in Johannesburg, and was later sentenced at the Old Bailey for the black-mail of Mr. Solly Joel. A coroner's inquest was held, and the jury brought in a verdict that "death was caused by strangulation, whether amounting to murder the evidence fails to show."

As a matter of fact Von Veltheim was very much alive, but the "identification" of the body complicated a mystery which even without that was sufficiently baffling. The river police began to puzzle it out. They were all watermen, and knew what the doctor had apparently overlooked—that a body will often swell after prolonged immersion in water.

Now, although the rope was tightly wound about the body of the dead man there was only one actual knot in it. The

police came to the conclusion that the doctor and the coroner's jury might be wrong. The theory they evolved was that the rope had become entangled about the man after, and not before, he was in the water, and that the swelling of the body had tightened it. On this theory they began to make enquiries. They discovered that a seaman named James Duncan had vanished from the ship *Thames* moored at the Carron Wharf near Tower Bridge. Moreover, there was missing from the ship a piece of "throw-line" similar to that twisted round the body. These facts made it possible to reconstruct the tragedy.

Duncan, unable to swim, had yet been tempted to take a bathe in the river. He had attached one end of the rope round his chest and fastened the other end to the ship. Then he had slipped overboard among the piles of the wharf. By some means the end of the rope in the ship had become detached. Duncan struggled to save himself and the rope became entangled about him. That was the solution of what at one time had seemed a baffling problem.

One of the grim parts of the work of the river police is the recovery of dead bodies from the Thames. The great bulk of these are assumed to be suicides. There are a few accidentally drowned persons, but it is rarely that a case occurs in which there are signs or suspicions of foul play. Since 1872 it has been the practice to photograph all bodies found, so that it is possible to identify an unknown person months, and sometimes years, afterwards.

CHAPTER XXI

EXTRA-POLICE WORK

"POLICE" is a wide word. In the history of Scotland Yard it has been stretched to its uttermost limits. Duties have been thrust upon the Metropolitan Police that only a very elastic interpretation of their functions could justify. That they have, in general, carried out those duties with efficiency makes it none the less illogical that they should have been called upon to perform them at all. There is perhaps less reason why they should license chimney-sweeps than motor-cars which come under the registration of the London County Council. Why should they be responsible for the storage of celluloid rather than the London Fire Brigade? They have in their time had to watch for smoky factory chimneys, and to see that lodging-houses were properly conducted, and had the proper cubic amount of space for each inmate. Yet the local vestries or councils have been charged with the suppression of brothels. These things bear indirectly upon the preservation of order and the prevention of crime, but so do many administrative matters which no one has so far suggested imposing on the London police. The police should be an executive body. In one sense it may be held that every extra duty imposed upon the police, outside their obvious work, must entail a loss of efficiency to the whole organisation. There is much to be said for confining police officers to the strict performance of police duties.

The control of traffic has long been accepted as a function of police. In the conditions under which the Metropolitan Police has grown up this was, perhaps, inevitable. There was no other authority with facilities for effectively dealing with the problem. In the original Police Act of 1829 no hint was given that this duty would be expected of the force; it was not till 1839 that statutory powers were for the first time given for the regulation of traffic in certain circumstances. Both Mayne and Rowan had complained emphatically of the difficulty. Legally, Mayne

pointed out in 1838, there was no power to make regulations even for a Royal procession—although the police had done so. “I believe,” he said, “that we are liable for actions for making them or enforcing them; and certainly the individuals of police who do enforce them are liable to actions.”

The Act of 1839 was the first piece of legislation that recognised the police as the chief traffic controllers, and gave them powers which they had in part assumed. At later periods other Acts have enlarged their authority, but even so, the magnitude of the problem has progressively increased. Commissions and Committees have suggested solutions without end in portentous Blue Books. Generation after generation has declared that a few years would see the congestion of London streets unendurable. But it was not till the Traffic Act of 1924 that any comprehensive scheme for the general handling of traffic could be put in force.

The Traffic Department of Scotland Yard is now in effect, if not in name, the chief traffic authority for London, and the Assistant Commissioner at its head has a seat on the London Traffic Advisory Committee. In one way and another there are 1,300 police officers engaged on traffic problems at an annual cost of £420,000.

The staff are constantly confronted with the problem of getting a quart into a pint pot. The regulation of traffic by mechanical signals—first tried at Westminster in the sixties; one-way streets; the round-about system at important traffic centres; the use of aircraft; fixed routes for omnibuses and the limitation of their numbers on congested routes, are among the methods they have recently been enabled to adopt.

Ancient difficulties have been largely swept away with the establishment of the Ministry of Transport; the confusion of authorities, the conflicting interests, the parochial jealousies; problems of street lighting, street widening, street refuges; the unwillingness of omnibus companies to submit to restrictions; dozens of trivialities which complicated the problem, and, added to the rapid growth, represented a problem almost insoluble.

On the whole, however, London has always compared favourably with other great cities in matters of traffic. One may compare the dirt, noise, confusion of New York, and the reckless driving there and in Paris, with the conditions in London, hampered by its narrow winding streets, without undue fear of the verdict.

In part this is no doubt due to the fact that all drivers and conductors of public vehicles are licensed by Scotland Yard, as well as public vehicles themselves. This brings us to an important section of the Traffic Department—the Public Carriage Branch, which has recently been installed in new premises at Lambeth. Originally the work done by this branch was not a matter of police. It was carried on by a Registrar of Public Carriages, whose office was merged in that of the Commissioner of Police in 1850. It came to Scotland Yard, in all probability, because Somerset House found that the wily old-fashioned cabdriver needed a great deal of looking after. There were ways of dodging the tests of fitness and character that were not infrequently practised. Testimonials were easily obtained, and personation was not difficult. John Jones might pass as Bill Smith and get a licence in his name. Moreover, although there were nominal enquiries made, some very thorough-paced rogues might be found handling the reins of a cab. Things were not as bad, perhaps, as they had been in the early days of the century, when it was notorious that many of the cabdrivers were the active allies of thieves, but there were drivers who were not too scrupulous about the business of their fares.

One may surmise that some such reasons were in the minds of those who passed the surveillance of cabmen over to the police. But the control of cabmen implied the control of cabs, and thus of trams, omnibuses, and other public vehicles.

Supervision of public carriages was not easy in the last century. The pirate omnibuses of those days had earned their title. Fares were a matter of the taste and fancy of the conductor. So long as a board was displayed showing what the fares were, he was within the law. He might change the board a dozen times a day if he liked.irate passengers occasionally appealed to the police, who, though cognisant of an obvious swindle, could do nothing. One ruse was to collect the fares of a bus-load of passengers and then turn them all out on the plea that the horse had lost a shoe. Another trick was a high fare for "any distance."

Scotland Yard now "approves" the table of fares, and you may see its stamp in any omnibus. It has been granted very much increased powers of control and surveillance. The primary functions of the Public Carriage Department still remain, but additional duties have been imposed.

Not a cab, omnibus, tramcar, or licensed charabanc that

plies for hire in London—and they number over 16,000—but has passed stringent tests by experts. Just as rigorous tests are applied to those who have charge of them.

It is still necessary for some of the staff of the Department to have a knowledge of horses, for, strange though it may appear, there are yet some 223 horsed cabs in London.

The coming of the motor was foreshadowed as long ago as 1887. The Commissioner's report for that year said: "Some disposition has been manifested to use the electric light in omnibuses, and experiments have been made with the view to provide additional motive power that shall supersede that of the horse."

The first motor-car to receive a licence was numbered H.C. 1897, on August 13, 1897. In the following year twenty-eight electric motor-cabs were licensed. The Commissioner's report for 1899 says: "During the year five omnibuses propelled by mechanical means were licensed, and two have for some time been regularly plying for hire; but this class of vehicle does not appear to find favour at present with the general public. The electrically propelled hackney carriages licensed in 1898 have all been withdrawn within the year."

The failure of these experiments would appear to have daunted enterprise for the moment. In 1904 there were but two motor-cabs in London, and thirty-one motor-buses. The following year there were nineteen cabs and 241 buses. It was not till 1910 that the number of motor-cabs outnumbered the hansoms and four-wheelers by 6,397 to 4,724. In the same year motor-buses overtook the horse-drawn buses by 1,200 to 1,103.

Every human precaution that years of experience can suggest is now taken to guard against the passing on to the streets of any man or public vehicle that might be a nuisance or a danger in congested traffic. Rigid regulations numbering some scores insist upon details as far apart as adequate brakes and freedom from noise. Whenever a car of a new type is devised, be it a cab, an omnibus, or a tramway-car, it has to be examined by Scotland Yard experts and to pass severe scrutiny and trials. Thereafter, if it is thought proper to allow the type on the streets, every vehicle built of that pattern must be placed in the hands of one of the local staffs of the Department—there are twelve of these in various quarters of London—and a certificate signed by the maker that there has been no

variation in the specifications. But nothing is taken for granted even then, and it is subjected to severe test ere a licence is granted. These licences are renewed annually, but at any time they may be suspended. There are skilled men dotted about London, all holding certificates of proficiency in motor engineering, who exercise a constant surveillance. Quick of eye and keen of hearing, they keep unceasing watch on all public vehicles. An unusual sound as a motor-omnibus passes may tell them something is wrong with the engine. Thereafter the proprietors are warned not to use the car until the defect has been remedied. Or they may station themselves unexpectedly at the gate of a garage, and test the brakes and steering gear of every car that passes in or out.

Before a man can hope to secure a licence as a taxi-driver from Scotland Yard he has to fulfil several qualifications. He has to be clean in dress and person, and not under 5 feet in height. Two householders who have known him for at least three years must give him a good character. A doctor is required to certify that he does not suffer from any serious ailment, that he does not smoke or drink excessively, and that he is fitted for his duties by temperament. After this he is permitted to undergo examinations in knowledge of London and tested for his capacity in handling a motor-car.

The topographical examination takes place *viva voce*, each man being interrogated separately. Eighteen questions are put, each bearing on the shortest route from one part of London to another. These questions are not at the discretion of the examiner, but are taken from one of a number of lists officially laid down. This test proves the greatest stumbling-block in the way of most aspirants. Thus we find something like this in each report of the Commissioner: "Seven hundred and thirty-five applicants for cabdrivers' licences passed the examination as to their knowledge of London and its environs. The want of sufficient knowledge on the part of many of the applicants necessitated no fewer than 10,195 separate examinations."

Nothing like this proportion fail at the driving tests. In the last year for which figures are available there were 11,279 examinations, and 9,607 men passed. Yet the test is no easy one. First of all there is a preliminary trial in the yard, so that the examiner is not called upon to risk life and limb—to say nothing of those of the public—before he is sure that the candidate has at least some rudimentary knowledge of driving.

Following this there is a more complete test under the difficult conditions of the West End. The candidate has to drive through heavy traffic, and is meanwhile questioned so that his judgment of speed may be measured. He has to drive round corners, and by obstructions, to reverse and keep within eighteen inches of the pavement. If he gets through all these things successfully he may return to the Yard to have his photograph taken and to get his licence.

Every man licensed has to be photographed after he has passed his tests, and thereafter every three years, and official portraits are placed on any documents that may be given to him. Duplicates are filed at Scotland Yard, and dossiers compiled of his record—warnings, convictions, medical tests, and so on. Any complaint about a cabman or omnibus man can be dealt with, with his full history immediately available.

Should a driver fail at his first test he is put back for a fortnight and allowed to try again; if at his second, he is put back for a month; at his third, for two months. His failure at the fourth examination means that hope is abandoned of making him a driver, and he gets no further chance.

The cabdriver has to behave himself. He never knows when he may be under observation, and such things as reckless driving, extortion, or other offences are reckoned against him when he comes up for a renewal of his licence. If a licence is cancelled or recalled there exists a committee of high police officials to whom appeal may be made. Some hundreds of cases are heard every year.

The Lost Property Office, now largely staffed by pensioners, is not, as is popularly supposed, a general depository for all articles found in London. It receives only things found in public carriages—tramway-cars, omnibuses, and trams. Other articles are dealt with by the police in the divisions where they happen to be found. The Lost Property Office was established three years after the Public Carriage Department, but does not seem to have been of much effective service till 1870, when some new regulations were framed.

Nowadays the business that devolves upon this office is almost incredible. There are rooms filled with articles varying from a navvy's pickaxe to costly jewels. The latest official figures show that 130,670 articles were deposited, and that 50,152 of the declared value of £63,118 were restored to the owners. There is a scale of rewards laid down by the Home Office, and under this drivers and conductors received £8,177.

The authorities do not merely look after articles until they are claimed. Every effort is made to trace the losers, and a large clerical staff is employed in sending out letters, where the property is marked or identifiable in any way, or where a cabman has remembered the address to which he carried the supposed losers. Some scores of thousands of letters are sent out annually in such cases, and there are, in addition, many thousands of written enquiries to answer and the daily stream of callers to attend to.

Once every three months articles that have remained unclaimed are sold by auction, and the proceeds passed on to the Board of Inland Revenue. The Metropolitan Police derive no benefit from the machinery they keep in motion to guard the public from its own carelessness. It is probable that in future a small fee will be charged for the return of property.

CHAPTER XXII

WOMEN POLICE AND OTHER MATTERS

A CYNIC might find food for amusement in the question of women police becoming a semi-political matter. By some extraordinary confusion of thought the right of a woman to become a police officer has been discussed with ponderous gravity, and some little acrimony, as if it had a vital bearing on the matter of the equality of the sexes. As well might a man complain because his lack of height prohibited his employment in the police ranks. Women may be very capable welfare workers. For many obvious reasons they cannot be used in any number to fulfil the full and primary duties of police adequately. "A woman preaching," said Dr. Johnson, "is like a dog walking on its hind legs. It is not done well, but you are surprised that it is done at all." So, as a general proposition, with the woman police officer. There is so much that she cannot do that it is almost futile to dwell upon the things that she can do. I am speaking of police work proper. Rescue work and welfare work are the purest incidentals to police duty. There may be scope for women in this direction—but not as police with John Citizen footing the bill. They cannot earn their pay—which incidentally is practically the same as that of their male colleagues. Few experienced chiefs of police, given the choice, would hesitate between a man and a woman recruit.

There are a few specialist directions in which competent women police officers may be of value. Women, to a point, may be valuable auxiliaries to a detective department, but even among the 900 detectives of the Criminal Investigation Department very few could be kept effectively employed. In fact there is only one. A woman, too, may be used with advantage in making enquiries into certain classes of offence.

Now there were women doing certain auxiliary police duties at Scotland Yard before 1919, when Sir Nevil Macready succeeded in persuading the powers to let him have 110 "women

patrols." These women were not at that time granted any power of arrest. Women police had been experimented with in Chicago, Ghent, and other places before the war. An unofficial "Woman Police" had sprung up in London during the war, affording an opportunity for certain ladies to show themselves in uniform. Another unofficial organisation, more favourably regarded by Scotland Yard, patrolled parks and open spaces.

Sir Nevil Macready, an ardent believer in women police, got the principle established. From thousands of applicants policewomen were selected with careful discrimination. They were given five weeks' training and set to work. Sir Nevil appears to have been satisfied with the experiment. "It was found that women who were in trouble, especially those who had yielded to the blandishments of soldiers, Colonials, and others who had returned from the war with plenty of money in their pockets, were more ready to appeal to the women police than to other social helpers, even to those of the Salvation Army. I do not know the reason; possibly it was because our women were very carefully chosen, and the need for sympathy in dealing with their own sex impressed on them during their training."

The achievements of the women police during 1921 were officially and solemnly recorded, including the remarkable facts that they assisted 25,046 persons to cross the road, and cautioned 12,031 children for riding behind vehicles. A detailed account of their activities has not been published since. (See table on page 179.)

Rigorous as the police regulations are, it is doubtful if most male constables would have troubled to report the bulk of these things. If they did so the figures of the police statistics would run into millions. The amount of real police work done by 110 ladies at a cost per annum of £27,000 can scarcely be considered anything but trivial. However, it is satisfactory to know that "their duties were zealously and carefully discharged."

In 1922 the Geddes Committee recommended the disbandment of the women police patrols. Mr. Shortt, the then Home Secretary, resolved to reduce them to twenty. He was vehemently attacked on this point in the House of Commons, particularly by some of the women members. He made an incisive reply, fragments of which I quote:

"One would suppose, hearing the speeches this evening, that in the first place no work was done in connection with the

<i>Persons Cautioned.</i>	<i>Attendances at Police Court.</i>	<i>Persons Assisted.</i>
Violation of public decency	4,856	Lost children and girls .. 1,439
Persons soliciting ..	3,362	First aid rendered .. 946
Persons loitering ..	24,140	Lodgings found .. 6,465
Persons begging ..	1,617	Assisted at dangerous crossings .. 25,046
Damaging property ..	7,575	Prisoners: searching, care of, escorting and observation on .. 1,469
Riotous behaviour ..	4,929	Statements taken .. 429
Breach of regulations (Hyde Park): cycling, football, etc.	7,421	Miscellaneous assistance .. 10,926
Using obscene language ..	4,209	Miscellaneous enquiries .. 2,993
Children riding behind vehicles	12,031	Welfare Department Girls passed to homes, hospitals, etc. .. 1,131
Totals ..	70,140	50,844
	332	

police by women until the women police were established. One would suppose that the moment the women police were disbanded, all work done by women in connection with the police would end. That is absolutely untrue. One would suppose that the women police had done police work as apart from welfare work. There is the whole gist of the trouble financially. I am the last person to belittle welfare work done by the women police, Salvation Army girls, or any other person, but the question arises, Is it police work? Is it work which should be put on the Police Vote? . . . That is the whole point. *The disbandment of the women police will not entail the employment of one single additional policeman.* There has not been a single policewoman in Hyde Park who has not had a policeman to protect her. The disbandment of the women police will not involve the reorganisation of a single police beat in the Metropolis, and the fact of the matter is that wherever we have employed these policewomen we have been obliged to employ policemen to protect them in case of need. It is said that policewomen are the proper persons to escort women prisoners. I agree, but do not let it be supposed for a moment that before the policewomen existed women prisoners were not escorted by women. They have always been escorted by women for the last twenty years, and they always will be. Do not let it be supposed that when women prisoners are searched they are not going to be searched by women in future, as they were before women police were heard of. Do not let it be supposed that children and small girls whose evidence has to be taken are not going to be interrogated by women and by trained women. They were before policewomen were heard of, and they will be after the policewomen are disbanded. All that will still be done, and done by women who are as highly trained as any of those who are in the police force. I am glad to say that some of the women in the police force we shall be able to continue to keep on, and all that work will still be done by women. It will be done at one-third of the cost of uniformed women, and the whole question is really not whether or not it should be done by women—everybody agrees that it should, and everybody agrees that it will—but whether it is to be done by a woman who wears a swagger uniform or by an ordinary woman out of uniform. . . .

“We are told that these women do a great work protecting young girls and young women. . . . The whole question before the Geddes Committee was not whether the work being

done by these women is good, but is it police work? Is it work which ought to be properly charged to the Police Fund, which partly falls on the Exchequer and partly on the rates? . . . Are these women doing police work? Their work is good. I admit that at once, and frankly, just as the Church Army, the Salvation Army, just as any other people's work is good, and if it be thought that a uniform is of some value, let them wear the uniform of the Ministry of Health, or anything you like, but it is not police work. . . ."

For the moment Mr. Shortt had his way. The women police in the Metropolis came down to twenty. They were given powers of arrest and sworn in. The force at this time consisted of two inspectors at £5 4s. a week each; three sergeants at £4 15s. to £4 17s. a week each; and fifteen constables at £3 4s. to £3 6s. 6d. a week each. But this establishment did not last. A Departmental Committee appointed by Mr. Arthur Henderson, when Home Secretary, reported in 1924 that the efficiency of the police service had been improved by the employment of policewomen, and "that at least as many women as were employed before the reduction in 1922 should again be appointed in the Metropolitan Police District."

Sir Nevil Macready gave the Committee his views. "The difficulty, of course, with women, as with men police, is to secure the right stamp of person. My idea was to recruit a proportion of all grades from educated women who, if required, could pass as society women in evening dress down to the ordinary working class. The main point is to eliminate the woman of extreme views—the vinegary spinster or blighted middle-aged fanatic—and to get broad-minded, kindly, sensible women who use common sense in dealing with their sisters who have taken a wrong turning, more often from a desire to lighten a dull existence than from inherent vice.

"That women police should have the power of arrest is essential, but this power should be restricted so as to avoid absurd situations, where enthusiastic women might try, for instance, to tackle a burly drunken man."

The Government did not act whole-heartedly on the suggestions of the Committee, but towards the end of 1924 the number of women police were increased to fifty. There was spirited competition among all classes of women for the appointments. The force now numbers two inspectors, five sergeants, and forty-three constables. One of the inspectors is attached to

the Criminal Investigation Department to aid in dealing with offences against young girls and children. This is no new departure. For years women without official police rank have been engaged in this work. In the Commissioner's Report for 1925 tribute is paid to "the valuable work done for a number of years by Miss MacDougall, not only in the taking of statements from women, young girls and children, but also in housing and caring for those who, pending a trial, are in need of care and shelter."

Apart from the women police, yet allied in many respects, are the police matrons, one of whom is attached to every police station. There are 252 of these. Their duties are officially defined: "To be in attendance at a police station whenever, and so long as, women or children are under detention; to accompany them to Court and to stay with them there when necessary; and to act as escort whenever it is necessary for girls or women to travel in police custody, as, *e.g.*, to reformatories, industrial schools, remand homes, etc."

The women police is not the only expensive excrescence on the Metropolitan Police. Perhaps the most elaborate toy maintained by Scotland Yard is the Mounted Police, which has been increased and become much more costly since the war. There is no more efficient and highly trained mounted force, men and horses, in the world. Twenty or thirty years ago they would have been a valuable adjunct to the force. Under modern conditions they are an anomaly only to be explained by the sentimental attachment of the administrators at Scotland Yard to the glamour of a more or less ceremonial squadron with very vague routine duties. There are approximately 300 picked men and an equal number of splendid horses in the mounted branch, distributed among four districts, each under a district inspector, while the whole branch is under a chief inspector. They are well equipped, and besides stables at Scotland Yard and other places, have a big training school, which was acquired a few years ago, at Imber Court, Esher, which embraces an area of thirty-four acres. The late head of the Police Training School defined the duties of the mounted branch:

Escort duty to the members of the Royal Family when driving in carriages.

Regulating crowds on ceremonial occasions.

Preceding and following ceremonial processions.



MOUNTED POLICE AT THE RICHMOND HORSE SHOW.

Escorting other processions.

Keeping order at public meetings—*i.e.*, Trafalgar Square, Hyde Park, etc.—and on occasions of industrial unrest.

For these purposes, therefore, 300 horsemen are kept. Now, ceremonial processions are few, and it would be a very big riot that would demand the services of even a third of the mounted police to suppress. No doubt once in a while—as during the general strike of 1926—the mounted police are very useful. Unfortunately there are 365 days in the year during which the men have to be paid and their animals fed. In the long-ago ages, before mechanical transport came into general use, there were a number of purposes which were served by the mounted police. They patrolled the highroads, and they acted as orderlies. But bicycles and motor-cars have made them obsolete. There is much the same argument against any considerable body of mounted men as there is against the women police. There is not enough work for them to perform. This has been reflected in the attempts at reorganisation that have been made while mechanical transport has been growing up. They were in the outer divisions on the theory that there lay the long, lonely stretches which they could most effectively patrol; they were located next in the inner divisions because it would be easier to mobilise them in the event of necessity. Again they went back to the outer divisions, and so the game of shuttlecock went on. For a period an experiment was made in placing some of them on traffic control in congested streets—a duty which, so far as motors were concerned, it was found could be much more satisfactorily done by the foot police. A great deal of thought has been expended to devise some means by which the mounted men might become of use from day to day. The problem has not been solved; it never will be solved till three parts of the branch are dispensed with and their places taken by fifty men with motor-cycles. The public will in that case be deprived of an occasional pretty spectacle, but it will be saving money, and the police protection of the Metropolis will be better.

CHAPTER XXIII

ERRORS OF JUSTICE

"THE London policeman," Lord Northcliffe once said to the writer, "does not grow wings under his cape." He had no special distrust of the police—indeed, he had great admiration for them—but, like the average man, he realised the special temptations to which police officers of all grades must always be exposed.

There is a section of the public which always has and always will believe that the police is corrupt. That a man has been carefully selected because of an unimpeachable character, sedulously drilled to honesty in word and act, supervised with infinite care by his superiors, and liable to heavy penalties for the least slip, does not affect their opinion in the least. Their view—and they at times become articulate—is that a man who dons the blue uniform has straightway become a rogue.⁴³

Considering the tens of thousands of men who have passed through the Metropolitan Police since the beginning, it is an amazing circumstance how infinitesimal is the proportion of those who have betrayed their trust in any serious degree. Men have been dismissed for offences against discipline, and for what in any other walk of life would be trivial offences, but graver charges have rarely been proved against them.

Yet the opportunities and temptations are limitless, and are not restricted to what are known as the criminal classes. A policeman need on occasion do no more than shut his eyes. The prostitute, the bookmaker, the motorist who has driven too fast, the night-club proprietor, the ordinarily well-behaved citizen who has taken too much to drink, are commonplace examples of persons who might offer the constable a bribe to look the other way. Imagine the predicament of a constable who finds that the person in his custody is a former high official of police, and that the charge may be hotly disputed. If the court should hold that he has made an error, anything may happen to him. On the other hand, by letting the prisoner

go he may avoid all risk to himself. Something of this sort has happened, but little emphasis has been laid on the embarrassment of the constable in the case.

Against this may be put the suspicion that the police bolster the evidence of each other. That there have been instances of this sort is an indisputable fact. There have been weak and unscrupulous men in the force who, from self-interest or from a mistaken notion of *esprit de corps*, have sworn to that which they knew to be false. But the evidence of anything like general corruption since 1829 is of the flimsiest character. The tradition of integrity in the police will stand comparison with that of any body of men—with the Bar, with the Church, with the medical profession.

Apart from the obvious dangers that beset an officer who might be tempted to stray from the strict path is a rule of the service that makes it extremely perilous to give way to any systematic dishonest practice. No man is promoted within his own district. If a constable becomes a sergeant he is placed in some district where he is away from the men with whom he may have been intimate. And so through every step of promotion. Collusion is thus rendered wellnigh impossible. For it would mean that the rank and file would have to induce a continually changing series of strangers to connive at their malpractices.

One of the earliest storms that arose about the ears of the police on the question of prostitution occurred in 1887. A woman was arrested in Regent Street on a charge of solicitation and brought before a magistrate. There were witnesses to prove that she was a respectable woman and she was acquitted. A bitter attack was at once launched on the police, and even carried into Parliament, where an enquiry was successfully demanded. A sort of extra-judicial enquiry was held by the Commissioner of Police, assisted by a London magistrate. That proved abortive. Then the constable concerned was indicted for perjury and acquitted on the ground that, though mistaken in his statements, he had not wilfully perjured himself. Some doubt remained with the public about the police *bona-fides* in the matter. Yet it never became public knowledge that the police were later proved to be absolutely in the right.

There have been mistakes by the police, but they have seldom lent themselves to furthering deliberate miscarriages of justice. There have, on the contrary, been numerous cases where they have intervened to prevent or remedy injustice.

A remarkable case in which the conduct of the police was open to some suspicion occurred in 1864. There was a fracas among a number of Italians and Englishmen in a public-house at Great Saffron Hill in the course of which a man named Harrington was stabbed. An Italian called Polioni, or Pelizzioni, was handed over to a constable named Fawel and charged with the murder. Inspector Ambrose Potter, of the G Division, took the matter in hand. According to his story he confronted Pelizzioni with the dying Harrington, and the latter identified him as the man who had inflicted the fatal stab. No weapon had been found on the spot where the struggle took place.

There was much conflict of evidence at the trial, and as Serjeant Ballantine remarked, there must have been gross perjury on one side or the other. Briefly, Pelizzioni's story was that he had entered the public-house after the murder, and that in trying to quell the disturbance he had been thrown on the body of the dying man. He had the character of being a very quiet and inoffensive person. It was asserted that the real murderer was one Gregorio Mogni, who had been very prominent in the row, and had some general physical resemblance to Pelizzioni.

In his evidence Potter made no mention of a knife having been found in an out-house—where Pelizzioni could not have put it—and handed to him. When, however, one of the later witnesses referred to it, Potter produced a knife with a white handle. This the man who had found the weapon declared not to be the one. In fact, the white-handled knife was actually one that had been taken from Pelizzioni. The knife with which it was alleged the murder had been committed had a black handle. Whether Potter had become confused on the subject, or whether he was deliberately trying to mislead the court, must remain an undecided question. Pelizzioni was convicted, and the judge, Mr. Baron Martin, in sentencing him, declared that he had never known more direct or conclusive evidence in any case.

An extraordinary agitation to save the condemned man broke forth. The Italian Ambassador had interviews with the Home Secretary. The newspapers dwelt with emphasis on the conflict of evidence. Mr. Negretti, head of the well-known optical firm, used money and personal effort to avert what he felt to be a gross miscarriage of justice. And on the eve of the day fixed for his execution Pelizzioni was respited.

Search was made for Mogni. He had gone to Birmingham,

and there he was found by Mr. Negretti, who persuaded him to give himself up. He alleged that he had struck the fatal blow in a general mêlée, and when he was put on his trial the defence was one of manslaughter.

At this trial Constable Baldock explained that he had taken the knife with the white handle from Pelizzioni. The other knife had been passed to him by another constable, and he agreed that it had not been produced at the previous trial. Mogni was found guilty of manslaughter and convicted. Thus the curious situation was produced of two men in prison, one convicted of the murder of Harrington, the other of his manslaughter.

The expedient was adopted of again putting Pelizzioni on his trial for wounding one of the men who had been present at the fracas. Potter was severely cross-examined, and came very badly out of it. Serjeant Ballantine commented upon the case thus: "It will be remembered that upon the first trial no weapon was produced or alluded to on the part of the prosecution, though it will scarcely be credited that the knife with which both injuries were inflicted had been for some time before in the hands of the police. The fact was not brought before the jury who tried the case, and it is difficult to find satisfactory reasons for this concealment. The knife had been found at some distance from the spot where the crime had been committed, and could not have been conveyed there by Pelizzioni."

Pelizzioni was acquitted, and a few days afterwards was awarded a free pardon for the murder of Harrington. What happened to the police in the case is not known. At the very least it must be held that Potter was guilty of culpable negligence through which an innocent man was very nearly hanged.

Perhaps in some ways the most extraordinary miscarriage of justice in the annals of the Metropolitan Police is that of Adolf Beck. Yet the police were only incidentally concerned in that huge blunder. Judges, the Home Office, the prison authorities may be blamed—in particular the Home Office—but the police had small part in the mistake, though at least two of them were the ultimate cause of its remedy.

In 1877 a man posing as "Lord Willoughby" defrauded a woman of a quantity of jewellery and a few shillings of money, by large promises of making her the mistress of his great house. He gave her a bogus cheque drawn on a non-existent bank, and it was only a day or two later that she realised she had

been duped. Then, meeting him in Tottenham Court Road, she handed him over to a constable named Spurrell. He was charged, and two other women gave evidence that he had defrauded them in a similar manner. In the name of John Smith he was sentenced at the Old Bailey to five years' penal servitude. He was released on licence in 1884.

In 1885 a Mr. Adolf Beck returned to London from South America and engaged in various commercial enterprises. For ten years he experienced various degrees of fortune, and was in 1895 living in a flat at Victoria Street. There, on an unlucky day, he was met by a girl, Otilie Meissonier. She handed him over to a policeman, and explained that he was a man who had defrauded her by posing as a wealthy nobleman and giving her a bogus cheque. Observe that exactly the same process was followed as by John Smith in 1877.

Now the police had received many complaints of a swindler of this type, and the matter was placed in the hands of Chief Inspector Frank Froest. Other women who had suffered were found, and of twenty-two women who were brought to see the prisoner ten positively identified him. Others were not certain. But there was only one who said he was not the swindler.

Someone remembered the frauds of 1877, and gave a hint to Scotland Yard. The records were looked up. The documents in each case were submitted to a handwriting expert and compared with the writing of the accused man. The expert declared them to be the same.⁴⁴ Constable Spurrell, recalled from his retirement, identified Beck as John Smith. Beck was sent for trial, found guilty, and sent to seven years' penal servitude. From the official point of view there was now no question that Adolf Beck and John Smith were one and the same person. There was only one person who felt doubt, and that was Beck's solicitor, Mr. Duerdin Dutton. He was convinced that there had been a terrible mistake, for Beck had been in South America when Smith was convicted. In fact, at the trial the defending counsel was not allowed to raise the issue that Beck was not Smith. It was not till 1898 that the Home Office, on the information that Smith was circumcised and Beck was not, took the step of giving Beck a new prison number which did not indicate a previous conviction. So far as the sentence was concerned, that stood. They let it be known that they considered the evidence against him in that case overwhelming.

Beck petitioned again and again for a reconsideration of the

case, and Mr. Dutton was unwearied in his efforts to the same end. All was without avail. Beck came out of prison on licence in 1901, and began to take steps to vindicate himself. In these he was helped by Mr. G. R. Sims, who had long known him and believed him incapable of the crimes alleged against him.

But the fates were against him. During March, 1904, a Miss Scott complained to the police that she had been duped by a man calling himself Lord Willoughby, who had given her a bogus cheque. The late Detective Inspector Ward remembered Adolf Beck. He took her to the place where the suspect was living, and she at once identified Beck. He was arrested, and all his protestations of innocence did not save him from a verdict of guilty at the Central Criminal Court. The judge, Mr. Justice Grantham, had no doubt of his guilt, but was uneasy for some reason about the case. He postponed sentence. This was on June 27.

Ten days later the real John Smith, who called himself Thomas this time, was arrested in the act of pawning rings which he had obtained from women in circumstances similar in every respect to those for which Beck had been convicted. He was taken to Tottenham Court Road Police Station, and there he was seen by a shrewd detective officer, the late Chief Inspector Kane. Kane leaped to the conclusion of the possibility of a mistake. He at once got in touch with Scotland Yard. Inspector Ward had also heard about Smith, and the same doubt occurred to him. He also reported to Scotland Yard, and was sent to Brixton Prison, where Smith was under remand. He reported:

" . . . I am of opinion that the prisoner Beck could easily have been mistaken for Thomas. Further, I am more convinced that Thomas is identical with John Smith. . . . I am strongly of opinion that there is a possibility of the witnesses having honestly mistaken Beck for Thomas. Beck, from the time he was first arrested, has protested his innocence, and in fairness to the prisoner Beck, it is essential that every effort should be made to ascertain if such an error has been made."

Kane also reported on the same lines. In another ten days all had been made clear and Beck was a free man. A committee, with the Master of the Rolls as chairman, exonerated the police from any blame in the chapter of calamities that had befallen Beck, and held that the failure of the prison authorities properly to describe Smith's physical peculiarities was the

primary cause of the miscarriage of justice. The Common Serjeant had made a mistake at the first trial, and the action of the Home Office was defective. In the end the Government gave Beck £5,000 by way of compensation. He died in 1909.

CHAPTER XXIV

TWO POLICE BATTLES

THE physical dangers to which a police officer is exposed in the daily exercise of his profession are by no means slight. Hundreds of men have been injured and scores killed in encounters with armed ruffians at various stages of the existence of the force. While practically every police force of other countries is armed with lethal weapons of some sort, the British police, as a usual custom, carry nothing more deadly than a baton. The police officer dislikes to be bothered with firearms, which he feels he is extremely unlikely to need, and when at one time it was suggested that detectives should be thus armed, there was a protest from the officers of the C.I.D. Revolvers to be served out in emergency are available at most police stations, but it is seldom that they are willingly carried.⁴⁵

Twice have the police waged something in the nature of organised battle with deadly weapons, and on each occasion have shown that shining gallantry which in the case of individuals has again and again adorned the traditions of the force. The first of these cases occurred in January, 1909.

In a turning out of High Street, Tottenham, within thirty or forty yards of a police station, was a rubber factory. To this every Saturday morning a clerk in a motor-car, driven by a chauffeur, fetched the week's wages, amounting to some £80, from the bank. On the morning with which this story has to deal there were awaiting the arrival of the car two Russians of doubtful character, one of whom, Paul Hefeld, had been employed by the firm. His companion was a man named "Jacob," or Jacob Meyer.

A young detective named Dixon noticed the two without attaching any special significance to their presence. It was not unusual to see men hanging about the doors of the factory. But he was to recall the fact ere long.

As the car with the wages drew to a standstill and the clerk descended, one of the two jostled him, and snatched the canvas

bag containing the money. As the chauffeur leaped from his seat and dashed at the robbers he was confronted with a levelled automatic pistol. A bullet seared his coat; another took off his cap. He escaped unharmed, but sufficient diversion had been created to give the assailants a start.

Two policemen, Tyler and Newman, rushed helmetless from the police station on the first shots. They flung themselves into the car with one of the heads of the firm. A passer-by seized Hefeld, but was compelled to relinquish his grip, for Jacob fired, wounding him in the head. A touch of comic relief was afforded by a woman who flung potatoes at the fleeing ruffians.

All this was a matter of seconds. The car gained on the fugitives. They halted, and Hefeld, resting his weapon on his left arm, fired with deliberation again and again. The first shot missed; the second shattered the wind-screen and grazed the chauffeur; the third pierced the radiator and stopped the engine.

Both policemen at once jumped out to continue the chase on foot. A crowd followed them, and the desperadoes in front continued to fire at intervals with deadly effect. A small boy, who had run out attracted by the commotion, was struck by a bullet and fell dead. The chase continued in the direction of Tottenham Marshes, and the constables began to gain.

"Give it up—the game's over," shouted Tyler. Hefeld, who was doing most of the shooting, his companion reloading for him, paused and turned. He sighted with care, and as he pressed the trigger Tyler fell dead, shot through the head. Newman was hit on the cheek, and assisted to carry his comrade into a near-by house.

Meanwhile other police were taking up the chase. Men armed and unarmed; on horseback, cycles, horse-traps, motors, and foot; even a motor-bus was requisitioned; in every stage of partial uniform or plain clothes, men were thrown into the hunt. The telephone and the telegraph had been busy, and from every station in the neighbourhood there were officers trying to head off and encircle the fugitives.

Nothing like this, it should be borne in mind, had ever happened before in the history of the Metropolitan Police. It had come, so to speak, out of a clear sky. Large, the subdivisional inspector on duty, had no time for consultation with anyone. He organised the pursuit, however, with as much cool calculation as if it had been an everyday occurrence,

and Superintendent Jenkins, when he took control, was equally unperturbed.

Across Tottenham Marshes the chase went on. An immense crowd, still with police officers in the van, was now engaged in the pursuit. Near a canal the two men once more turned at bay, and a constable fell shot in the leg; a boy was wounded; a woman who ran out of a cottage had an empty pistol snapped at her head. Some men armed with shotguns were bird-shooting on the marshes, but did not comprehend the shouts to shoot down the runaways, and the latter passed them unharmed.

Hefeld and Jacob managed to cross a bridge over the canal and shot down a workman who hurled a brick at them. From the parapet of the bridge they made another brief stand, but, as a contemporary account said, "the policemen at the head of the chase showed reckless courage, charging on against the bullets." Only one of them, who had received a revolver as the chase passed a fire-station, was armed at this time. Twenty people were wounded as well as two killed during the course of the pursuit.

The most amazing and dramatic point of the episode occurred when the fugitives reached the Chingford Road. Closely pressed, they held up an electric tramcar at the point of the revolver, firing on the driver till they drove him to take refuge on the top.

They boarded the car. Hefeld put a pistol to the conductor's head, and forced him to the front platform. "Drive!" he ordered. And in spite of the conductor's protests he was forced to start the car. A passenger, an elderly man, sprang at Jacob and was promptly shot in the neck. The only other occupants of the tram were a woman and a child. From the rear platform Jacob then opened a fierce fire on the pursuers.

Police officers leaped into a trap standing by the pavement and the horse was whipped up. A minute later it was shot down and the occupants of the cart thrown out. A tramcar on the opposite rails was reversed, manned with police, and took up the chase. Many motor-cars and mounted police were by this time also following up.

A motor-car drew ahead of the tram and compelled it to stop. Out jumped Hefeld and Jacob, shot down a milkman and seized his cart. This was somehow wrecked, and the ruffians took to a greengrocer's cart, which by some lucky

chance had been secured by a chain brake, so that, although one lashed the horse to exhaustion while the other held the pursuers at bay, no speed could be attained.

They abandoned the cart at last and took to their heels again, being now themselves under fire, for some sportsmen with shotguns had joined the chase in a motor-car and kept up a fusillade upon them. A constable on point duty deterred them from making for Epping Forest, and they took to the fields. Soon they were confronted with a tall fence and barbed wire. Both made a desperate attempt to scale it, but they were wellnigh exhausted and were under fire from the shotguns. Hefeld fell. The other man got over.

Before a police sergeant who had kept up with the fugitives on a bicycle could reach the exhausted man, Hefeld put his pistol to his head, and with his last remaining cartridge attempted to blow out his brains. He succeeded only in wounding himself desperately, and was conveyed to hospital, where he died some ten days later.

Meanwhile Jacob, hotly pressed, was making for an unfinished building where workmen were busy. A plasterer threw two bricks at him, missed, and immediately fell a victim to the deadly pistol of the fugitive. But this diverted Jacob, and he made for the shelter of a small cottage, which he reached by crawling through a ditch and under a fence, a little in front of his nearest pursuers.

Entering by the back door he turned the key in the lock, seized a mug, filled it with water from a tap, and drank greedily. The housewife fled through the front door with her youngest child in her arms. A small boy left in one of the rooms cried in fright, and was threatened with death if he did not "stop that noise."

Jacob tried first to hide himself up the chimney; but that proving too small, he fled upstairs and shut himself in a bedroom. A constable in plain clothes—Eagles—made a courageous attempt to enter the house through a back bedroom window by means of a ladder; but, foiled in this, he joined Detective Dixon, who with Constable Cater had been more successful with a lower window. I will give here Dixon's own account of this part of the affair:

"Acting very warily, Cater and myself managed to enter the cottage through a lower window, and the first thing we learned was that Jacob had bolted upstairs, for he had shown his face at the front bedroom window, and instantly several

volleys were fired, one result being that all the glass was knocked out of the frames.

"As soon as we had got inside the cottage we saw a number of sooty handmarks on the furniture and walls. These led us to think that the murderer had tried to get up the chimney, so I directed Cater to fire up the chimney with his revolver. This he did, but nothing seemed to be struck except soot and bricks.

"Finding that Jacob was not in the lower part of the house, I opened the door which led to the little old-fashioned staircase. From this staircase a small landing, such as you often see in old cottages, led to the front bedroom. I got to this landing and opened the bedroom door—not too quickly and not too widely—and the first thing I knew was that Jacob was standing on the stairs with his pistol pointed at me. He instantly fired, but I had sprung back before he could get at me. I swiftly closed the door again and called on him to surrender.

"‘If you surrender,’ I shouted through the doorway, ‘throw down the revolver. We won’t hurt you.’

"Jacob muttered something which I did not understand—he did not speak good English; but I saw that he did not mean to surrender, so I suggested to Sergeant Bunn and others that, as there was a mongrel dog tied up near the back door, it should be released and taken inside and told to go upstairs, to see if it could drive Jacob out of the bedroom, or at least take his attention off us and give us a better chance of getting him. . . . So it was agreed that the dog should have a chance, and accordingly it was untied—I believe by Sergeant Bunn—and it went into the cottage. It was not an easy matter to deal with the animal, which appeared to be very ferocious.

"The dog sprang up the staircase and promptly did what we had not been able to do—it frightened Jacob so much that he bolted away from the door after shutting it.

"At this stage someone entered the cottage with a double-barrelled fowling-piece, and taking this weapon, I fired one of the barrels at the closed door with it; but the pellets had little or no effect, and only slightly damaged the wood. I pulled the other trigger, but that barrel would not go off, so the fowling-piece was a failure.

"In the meantime Cater and I had got our revolvers loaded, and we set to work. The door was very thin deal, so that our bullets went through with ease, making holes which enabled us to see into the room. It was a dangerous thing to peep

through the holes, but we did so, and saw that Jacob was tearing about the room in a terribly excited state, and was literally at bay.

"Eagles, who did not seem to value his life as much as I valued mine, pushed up and said: 'Let me have a pop at him!'

"I said: 'No; I want the revolver to defend myself with.' But he begged again, and after a lot of persuasion I allowed him to take it.

"Then Eagles, without the slightest hesitation, hurled himself against the door, burst it open, thrust his arm round until it was well inside the room, and fired two shots. What the result of them was I cannot say, for it was never ascertained whether one or both struck Jacob, or whether he killed himself at last with his own revolver.

"When Eagles could see into the room he saw that Jacob was leaping about and laughing wildly. He shouted to us: 'Come on now!' Whereupon the man sprang on to a child's bed which was in the room, and instantly tried to pull the clothes over his head. He still had the revolver in one hand.

"As soon as the cry, 'Come on now!' went up, Eagles rushed into the room and up to the bed, and I went after him. Like a flash Eagles snatched the pistol from Jacob's hand, and I seized him by the throat and dragged him on to the floor and down the staircase, pulling him backwards. The blood was oozing from his forehead, and it was clear that he was dangerously wounded by one or more bullets.

"I dragged him down the stairs into the yard, where he was left lying on his back. A crowd came round him instantly. Jacob was between life and death, and there was a horrible grin on his face. He never stopped grinning, and that awful look was on his face when he died, which was soon with the crowd round him and his eyes staring."

A curious fact was that there was only £5 upon the body of the dead man, and the remainder of the stolen £80, which was largely in silver, was never recovered.

The King's police medal was awarded to Dixon, Cater, and Eagles for their share in this exploit, and they all received promotion.

An even more remarkable affair than that of Tottenham was what has come to be called the battle of Sidney Street, which took place on January 3, 1911. It was marked throughout by every circumstance of incredible melodrama.

A little band of reckless young criminal aliens—they were

Russian Letts of anarchical leanings—resolved to rob a jeweller's shop in Houndsditch. To this end premises backing on the shop, in Exchange Buildings, a side turning, were taken by a slim young man who passed under the name of Levi. He, and a girl assumed to be his wife, were the only people seen about the place. As a matter of fact, there had furtively been transported thither a complete set of burglar's tools and apparatus. This had been done by four men, of whom the chief was one George Gardstein. All were young. All were fiery and desperate criminals of a type fortunately rare in this country. Associated with them directly or indirectly were eight or nine other men and three women.

The scheme was simple. It was to break through the wall that separated them from the jeweller's shop, and then to raid the place at leisure. But the City Police, in whose area this was, heard suspicious noises on one or two occasions, and on the night of December 16 the proprietor of a fancy goods establishment near to the jeweller's called the attention of a constable to a recurrence of the sounds. He at once summoned assistance, and a party of officers under Sergeant Bentley began to investigate.

Bentley knocked at the door of 11, Exchange Buildings. Within four members of the gang were furiously at work. There was Gardstein, there was Fritz Svaars, there was Joseph Vogel, there was Levi. These at any rate were the names by which they were known in England. The real name of Gardstein was Morountzeff.

One man was attacking the wall with a crowbar, his pistol lying handy on an occasional table behind him, when the police summons at the door interrupted operations. It was Fritz who answered. He opened the door a matter of a few inches. "Have you been working here, or knocking about inside?" demanded the sergeant.

Fritz, without replying, endeavoured to slam the door in the face of the officers. But a boot thrust inward frustrated this, and he dashed back, calling to his chief. Bentley pushed his way into a dimly-lit hall, and a moment later Gardstein, pistol in hand, plunged down, firing as fast as finger could move the trigger.

Bentley dropped, and his companions, Sergeant Tucker, Sergeant Bryant, and Constable Woodhams, rushed forward. They were met with a storm of bullets. Tucker fell mortally wounded. Bryant was hit in the head, and Woodhams dropped with a bullet in his thigh. All this was a matter of seconds.

Gardstein stood in the doorway, and from behind him one of his associates opened fire from a landing in the general direction of the street. Most of his shower of bullets scattered harmlessly, but one at least found its mark in Gardstein's back. The leader of the gang crashed down among the dead and dying police officers.

Some of what followed must necessarily be a matter of surmise. The man who had shot Gardstein fled into the street, firing right and left. Gallant Constable Choaté, of the City Police, although unarmed and already wounded in several places, flung himself upon the fugitive and attempted to seize his revolver. Again and again the officer was shot, but it was a bullet from the house that at last made him fall dying to the ground. He received in all eight wounds.

All this, of course, happened very quickly—so quickly that officers who had been posted in Houndsditch raced round at the sound of the firing too late to do more than take up the pursuit of the escaping man, who, however, eluded them in the darkness.

Desperadoes though they were, there must have been some strain of loyalty in Fritz Svaars and Joseph Vogel. With the police for the moment out of action, they lifted their dying chief, and supporting him as well as they could, made a tedious journey to Fritz's lodgings in Grove Street, Whitechapel. A woman accompanied them. The last to see them was a tobacconist's manager, who was menaced with revolvers.

They left their companion in temporary safety, and, according to Sir Melville Macnaghten, under the impression that the shot which had wounded him was not altogether an accident, spent some at least of the remainder of the night searching for "Levi" to avenge what they thought was treachery. They did not find him. Here it may be said that he made good his escape, with other members of the gang, to Paris, and lived there for many months. The difficulty of obtaining legal proof of his association with the murders proved insuperable.

At half-past three in the morning a Dr. Scanlan—who was acting as a temporary assistant to a Dr. Bernstein—was roused by two excited women, who urged him in nervous broken English to accompany them to a man who had hurt himself "very bad" and was lying in a house in Grove Street. With the girls walking a few paces ahead, talking volubly together in some foreign language, he set out. They had gone a few yards along the Commercial Road when one of the women

abruptly vanished down a side turning. No word of explanation was vouchsafed, and the other woman went silently on, Dr. Scanlan as silently following.

So they came to a shuttered and locked house in Grove Street. A single gleam of light filtered from an upper room, but knockings on the door brought no response. Impatiently the doctor knocked upon the shutters, and at last the door was opened by someone who hastily retreated into the pitch blackness of the house. With the woman who had fetched him leading, the doctor stumbled up the stairs—he had to strike a match to see the way—and was ushered into a poorly lit bedroom. Disordered clothes lay about the place, and a mandoline was upon a table. Stretched upon a bed was a young, foreign-looking, handsome man, fully dressed, and moaning in pain.

He gave his name as George Gardstein, and in broken English he explained, "Three hours ago I was shot by a friend in the back with a revolver by mistake."

By a dim, flickering gas light—the woman put a penny in the slot to ensure that it continued—the doctor made his examination. He had been shot through the lung and stomach, and there was little that could be done. He moaned pitifully for a narcotic. The doctor attempted to question the woman and the dying man in French. He learned little. This, however, the girl made clear with emphasis: in no circumstances would she allow the wounded man to be taken to the London Hospital. Dr. Scanlan abandoned a persuasion that he saw was hopeless, and accompanied the girl back to the surgery, where he gave her some medicine to take to the wounded man.

Towards midday he returned to the house. The door was opened by two men wearing caps. "How is the young man upstairs?" asked the doctor.

"We don't know anything about it," they retorted. The doctor passed on and found his mysterious patient dead. The police were informed and searched the place. Under the pillow on which the dead man's head rested was a loaded automatic pistol and a large quantity of ammunition. A woman named Sara Trassjonsky, who was found burning papers in an adjoining room, was arrested as an accessory to the murders, but was later acquitted.

The difficulties under which the police had to conduct their investigations into the crime cannot be exaggerated. Enquiries had to be made among aliens, some criminals, some

revolutionaries, mainly uneducated, and almost all liars. The detectives of both the Metropolitan and City Police worked with unsparing zeal. It had become a point of honour that their fallen comrades should not go unavenged.

Chief Constable Wensley, then the Divisional Inspector of the H Division, in whose area Grove Street stood, and Detective Inspector Willis, of the City Police, took a large share in these investigations. More than once they were close on the heels of the gang, who moved from place to place in the East End. One or two arrests were made, but insufficient evidence brought about acquittals. A house in Gold Street, off the Whitechapel Road, where Gardstein had had lodgings, and posed as an artist, was discovered. Here was found a perfect little arsenal. There was a magazine pistol with 600 cartridges, of which 150 had soft-nosed bullets. There was a dagger, bottles of nitric acid, nitro-glycerine, mercury, potassium chloride, and other explosive ingredients, scientific works on explosives, and a collection of anarchist literature.

The year had passed before any very definite clue rewarded the pertinacious exertions of the detectives. Then information reached them that two of the wanted men had taken refuge with a woman living in Sidney Street. This woman was shadowed on January 2, and led the officers to 100, Sidney Street, a shabby, four-storied house in a thoroughfare running between the Mile End Road and the Commercial Road.

"The police were told," said Sir William Nott-Bower, Commissioner of the City Police at the time, "that the two men were armed with Mauser pistols and a large quantity of ammunition, and that they were determined to shoot as many policemen as they could in the event of an attempt being made to arrest them, and in no case to allow themselves to be taken alive; also that they had decided, if necessary, to set fire to the house and kill themselves rather than be arrested."

The occupants of 100, Sidney Street were a Mr. and Mrs. Fleishman, who let the house out in apartments. Among their lodgers was a Mrs. Betsy Gershon, a Russian dressmaker, who had some acquaintance with Joseph Vogel. Joseph, whom she had not seen for six weeks, paid her a visit on New Year's Day, accompanied by Fritz Svaars, whom she had never seen before. They had tea and stayed for a couple of hours.

The following night—Monday—they returned at about half-past ten. Again they consumed tea, and towards midnight the little woman gave them a broad hint that it was time

for them to go. Joseph shook his head. He and his friend, he declared, had resolved to stay the night. This cold resolution did not meet with the approval of the lady. Indeed, she passionately dissented.

The men became menacing, and fists shaken under her face, together with a stern order to be quiet, convinced her that argument was useless. She was ordered to take off her shoes and to sleep in an adjoining apartment, which was used as a stock-room by the Fleishmans.

Meanwhile, at one in the morning a force of some fifty City Police in plain clothes and forty of the Metropolitan Police had gathered outside. Some four of these carried Morris-tube rifles picked up from some miniature rifle range; fifteen were armed with revolvers of a sort. Among the lot there was not one weapon which for precision or power could compare with those in possession of the fugitives.

The house was surrounded, and the first problem that confronted the detectives—that of extricating all the inmates of the house, save their quarry, without arousing suspicion—was considered.

Mr. and Mrs. Fleishman were quietly interviewed. The woman was sent up to fetch Mrs. Gershon. "My husband is taken bad," she explained. "Will you come down?" So the dressmaker was got out of the way.

From the first floor the detectives removed a man and a woman, but an old couple on the ground floor were not dealt with so easily. Scared almost out of their wits they refused to go, and screamed protests when the officers carried them out by force. It was a ticklish business, for the police knew that a burst of fire from the desperadoes might open upon them at any second. But they went systematically on with their work, and people in the houses opposite and on either side were removed. It cannot be doubted that the men on the second floor had a shrewd notion of what was going on, but they made no move in the darkness.

Those in control of the police had no intention of wasting valuable lives in an attempt to rush the narrow staircase which led to the retreat of the two men. There were plenty of officers willing to take the risk, but it was too great. Two men armed with automatics could have held the place against a hand-to-hand assault by a thousand.

At four o'clock in the morning a hundred police from the City and a hundred Metropolitan Police were brought up as

reinforcements. A cordon was drawn round the block of buildings, and no one was allowed to approach.

A few detectives and officials were within this cordon, and they waited in a raw drizzle for the dawn to break. As the light began to gather strength at about half-past seven in the morning a peremptory knock was given on the door. There was no reply to this summons, and a handful of gravel was thrown against the windows of the room where the men were known to be. The reply was instant. A storm of bullets swept down into the street, and the police officers hastily made for cover. One of them, Detective Sergeant Leeson, of the H Division, in scrambling over the roof of a large shed immediately opposite, was shot through the chest. Wensley pulled him across the roof and out of the fire-swept zone. Those of the police who were armed immediately began to return the fire from a brewery yard opposite. The battle was on.

It soon became evident that the weapons of the police were no match for those of their opponents. A detachment of Scots Guards from the Tower was sent for, and nineteen men, all picked shots, proceeded to the scene. As the day wore on there were armed men everywhere, with weapons ranging from service rifles, automatic pistols, and bulldog revolvers, to double-barrelled sporting guns. There was no chance of escape for the caged men, but it was realised that if they could hold out till the early winter nightfall, things might become awkward. Major Wodehouse, the Administrative Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, took charge of the operations.

Huge crowds besieged all the approaches to Sidney Street and were kept back by the cordon of police—hundreds of officers from all parts of London were now present. Guardsmen lay on newspaper boards in the roadway firing at the flashes that came from the besieged house seventy yards away. From bedrooms in which hastily constructed but scarcely bullet-proof barricades of furniture had been improvised, soldiers and police were keeping up a heavy fire.

Practically all the glass and woodwork of the windows had been shattered by bullets, but still the defenders held on, exposing themselves scarcely at all, and firing from behind the curtains. Only once was the firing interrupted. That was when a daring police officer dashed out, and battered the door of the invested house open with the butt of a rifle. Shortly after the door was closed by one of those inside.

The question of assault was discussed by Sir Melville

Macnaghten with several of his officers. He has given an account of that discussion:

"I pass on into Sidney Street and encounter two or three officers of the C.I.D. Down there I glean an excited account of what has taken place, and very urgent appeals are made to be allowed to 'rush' the house and avenge their comrade, of whose death in the London Hospital a rumour (happily without foundation) has reached them. . . .

"Firstly the geography of the house, which later on it may be necessary to carry by assault, is explained. The street door opens on to a narrow passage, some twelve feet in length, leading direct to a straight and steep flight of about thirteen stairs, which then turn at a right angle. It is obvious, therefore, that if one of the desperadoes takes up his position at the top of the first flight, by extending his hand round and in a downward direction he can sweep the doors and the passage with his pistol, and cause a maximum of damage to the attackers with a minimum of danger to himself. One or two bodies falling between the door and the staircase would so effectually block the narrow passage as to make it probable that many valuable lives would be lost if a frontal attack were made. The prospects of a rear attack are said to be worse. The amount of ammunition in the hands of the defenders of the house appears to be inexhaustible, or else they are firing with a reckless prodigality which is quite unintelligible.

"Volunteers are not lacking for the forlorn hope; not a man on the spot—be he uniform constable or detective sergeant—but is burning to 'have a go at the villains'; but, as was afterwards most wisely said, there must be other ways of dealing with these men than by choking them to death with British blood. It is therefore decided that, as far as an immediate attack goes, no steps shall be taken. Meanwhile the firing into the house from all sides is to be continued in the hope that some bullet may eventually find a billet."

So it was resolved to wait upon events. One ruse was tried without success. A dummy was dressed in a police sergeant's uniform to draw the fire of the besieged men and induce them, if possible, to disclose themselves. But although the dummy was hit, Fritz and Joseph were too wary to give their attackers an opportunity.

There was a touch of drama which no spectator knew. For, standing in the brewery yard, Detective Inspector Wensley told his chief of plans to lay hands on Steinie Morrison, the

Clapham Common murderer. "Two days," recorded Sir Melville Macnaghten, "have now elapsed since Leon Beron was found murdered on Clapham Common, and up to last night no clue has reached the Yard. I now learn that my companion is satisfied as to the identity of the murderer, and has no doubt that he will be able to lay his hands on him in the course of a few days. This is really good news, and so interested in it am I that I forget our *locus standi* is uncomfortably near the danger zone, and that although we are some 150 yards from the bullet-belching window, some shots have just struck the wall in very close proximity. The inspector thinks we had better be shifting our ground, and so do I!"

The crack of rifles and pistols and the whine of bullets continued. Otherwise the drama went on without much incident. Shortly after midday Mr. Winston Churchill, the then Home Secretary, arrived. A great deal of nonsense was written at the time, and has been written since, of the part that he played in the siege. As a fact, he was little more than a spectator.

After his arrival two guns of the Royal Horse Artillery were sent for, and it is even said that Royal Engineers were requisitioned, with some idea of mining under the house. Neither the guns nor the sappers were used, although the guns actually arrived. Another event rendered them unnecessary.

A little before one o'clock the firing seemed to slacken. From a spectacular point of view the siege was becoming monotonous. Then the watchers saw a tiny, almost indistinguishable whiff of smoke ascending from the attic windows. In a little it grew thicker, and doubts were at rest. The house was on fire. Unless the two desperadoes could extinguish it the end could not be long delayed. The occasional crackle and roar of flames could be heard above the firearms.

The flames crept downwards, and the besieged men were driven into the lower rooms, but still there were occasional bursts of venomous firing from the windows. Fire-engines dashed to the verge of the police cordon, and the brigade officers protested when prevented from approaching the house—even carrying their appeal to the Home Secretary, who supported the police action.

What may be called a second line of police—men armed with shotguns, who had not hitherto taken an active part in the fighting—crept closer. There was always the chance that the two men, finding the house literally too hot to hold them,

might make a last mad dash for escape, firing indiscriminately on all who stood in the way. But nothing of the sort happened.

A couple or three shots came from the ground-floor windows, and then, though the invaders kept up their fusillade for a time, there was no reply. The house was now a mass of flames, and it was improbable that any human being could remain alive in it.

Detective Inspector McCarthy (later Superintendent), of the Special Branch, slipped forward and kicked down the charred door. Nothing happened. A minute or two later Mr. Winston Churchill, with a police sergeant carrying a shotgun as escort, made a swift inspection. Then the firemen were allowed to get to their work—as hazardous, if perhaps less spectacular, than any other part of the siege, for the roof and floors were giving way.

Thrills, however, were not finished, for, after a little, the firemen reported that they had not found any bodies. In the inexplicable fashion of rumours it spread from mouth to mouth that, after all, the criminals had escaped through the back of the house. "As to this," said Sir Melville Macnaghten, "I never had any apprehensions. The rear had been guarded by some City Police officers, under command of a certain sergeant. Him had I interviewed and conferred with earlier in the day, and from the man's appearance and manner I felt quite certain that no fugitive would have escaped his vigilance."

The firemen continued their perilous work, and five of them were injured by a fall of debris among the ruins. At half-past three the result of the affair was placed beyond doubt by the discovery of two charred bodies, unquestionably those of Fritz Svaars and Joseph Vogel. One of them had been killed by a bullet fired by the soldiers or police, and the other had continued the fight alone until he was suffocated by smoke. A Browning automatic pistol, two Mauser pistols, and six gun-metal bomb-cases were found in the ruins.

Besides Detective Sergeant Leeson and the firemen, a colour-sergeant of the Scots Guards was wounded in the leg, and three civilians were slightly injured. Superintendent (later Sir) Patrick Quinn was struck by a spent ricocheting bullet and severely bruised.

So ended the siege of Sidney Street, and so two more of the assassins of Houndsditch were accounted for. There remained, certainly, one man directly implicated in the murders, and probably a woman. Sir William Nott-Bower gives the total

number of persons concerned as fourteen or fifteen people. Among these he places Peter Piakon ("Peter the Painter"). Sir Melville Macnaghten, however, asserted that he believed Peter to have nothing to do with the affair, and, indeed, to have been out of England at the time.

The investigation, however, went on after the deaths of Fritz and Joseph. It was unparalleled in the history of Scotland Yard and the Old Jewry. I doubt if before or since such an immense number of detectives have been concentrated on one case. Swift action had to follow the picking up of any clue, and there was little time to ensure the accuracy of information. London never knew that again and again scores of armed men were quietly concentrated in certain places, ready to join in what might be an episode quite as thrilling and dramatic as Sidney Street itself.

There was one winter night when a group of East End streets were made the subject of a house-to-house search. The police, all armed, took no chances. One suspect was pulled bodily out of bed in his nightshirt, and marched as he was in a borrowed overcoat to Bishopsgate Police Station.

In all five men and three women fell into the hands of the police at various times. But conclusive evidence on which a jury would convict was almost impossible to obtain. The full story of Houndsditch and Sidney Street still remains to a certain point a mystery.

CHAPTER XXV

THE FIRST DETECTIVES

THE links that now hold the peace of London were forged one by one as time and experience showed the weaknesses of the chain. Although the fundamentals of the science of police were early grasped by the originators of the London Police Force, it took long before they were all applied. There was one great gap in the original plan of the Metropolitan Police that was not remedied for thirteen years. That was the absence of a detective department.

It was as though an army should enter an enemy's country without scouts. Law and order, generally speaking, could only be maintained within the range of a police officer's eyesight. The uniform, with its prestige, which was a help in moments of decisive action, was a hindrance in the more subtle processes of detective work.

In 1842 the matter was taken in hand. With some caution Sir James Graham, the Home Secretary, empowered the Commissioners to appoint twelve detectives, of whom three were inspectors and nine sergeants. All of these were taken from the ranks of the uniformed men.

There is no obstacle, even now, to the appointment of outsiders direct to the detective service, but in practice—with an exception to which reference will be made later—the tradition, then established, has since been carried out of recruiting from the uniformed branch.

These twelve men must have had their hands full. They had not only London with its myriads of wrongdoers to look after, but appear to have been extensively called upon for investigations out of town. They were purely and simply a headquarters force to undertake duty in any place where the occasion might arise. As with the old Bow Street runners, anyone in England—and sometimes out of it—who chose to pay the expenses might employ one of these men.

There was nothing in the nature of an effective detective service as we now understand it. When one of these men was detailed upon a case he was not likely to find skilled assistance. True, in a half-hearted sort of way some attempt was made at local detective work by the spasmodic method of putting a few constables in plain clothes in each division. These men, however, might be selected for plain clothes duty one day and be in uniform on the next. The usual practice was month about in and out of uniform. They were, in every sense of the word, not detectives, but constables out of uniform with definite patrol duties. For twenty-seven years afterwards the actual detective force of the Metropolis never exceeded fifteen persons.

The original twelve were housed in three tiny rooms in Old Scotland Yard, and it was so that the name began as a synonym for the detective system in particular and the Metropolitan Police Force in general.

With all the limitations under which they laboured the early detectives speedily justified themselves. They had been selected with discrimination. From the chronicler's point of view it is regrettable that many documents which shed a vivid light on their methods and difficulties should have been destroyed when police headquarters were removed to New Scotland Yard in 1890. Some of the reports of those early detectives must have made exciting reading. Although they have gone, there fortunately remain the glimpses which Dickens has afforded us of both the men and their work—sketches made barely eight years after the birth of the detective force.

One of the first great crimes that occurred after the formation of the new detective force was the murder of O'Connor, a Customs official, by Mr. and Mrs. Manning. Whether detectives were actually employed upon it is not clear from those records to which I have had access. The report of the trial gives the name and rank of one of the witnesses as "Mr. J. Haynes, superintendent of the detective police," and Major Arthur Griffiths speaks of "Barnes, a Scotland Yard detective." But Barnes was certainly a uniformed constable, and I suspect that Haynes was probably superintendent of the M Division. But whether the official detectives were actually engaged upon the case or not, it is a striking instance of that close observation, quick deduction and widespread co-operation which is essential to efficient detective work.

Mrs. Manning, who was a Swiss by birth, was the mistress

of O'Connor. Her husband, a ne'er-do-well with a shady past, knew well the relations that existed between them, and sullenly acquiesced. In course of time this pair concocted a plot to murder O'Connor, with the idea of acquiring such of his money and goods as they could lay their hands upon. Their plans were made and carried out with infinite deliberation.

On August 9, 1849, O'Connor passed two friends on London Bridge. He told them that he was going to dine with "Maria" at her home in Minver Place, Bermondsey. He was never seen alive again.

Surprised at his disappearance, his friends applied to the police. Mrs. Manning was interviewed, and answered all enquiries with coolness and composure. But the pertinacity of the missing man's friends resulted in a further police visit to her house some days later. No one was there. Gone were the Mannings and their furniture. The house was empty. Here was enough to justify the suspicions that had begun to take shape.

Two constables, Barnes and another, were deputed to search the place. Closely, thoroughly they went through the house, but not until they went down to the basement was their search rewarded.

In this semi-underground kitchen the keen scrutiny of Barnes wandered to the stone-flagged floor. Stooping, he borrowed a knife from his companion, and pried at the mortar between two of the stones. It was still soft.

A crowbar, shovel, and other implements were borrowed, and digging commenced. Barnes, with some astuteness, observed on removing one of the flags that it had never been laid by a mason, "because it had a bed of mortar under it instead of the mortar being merely round the edges." Two feet down the body of a murdered man was found. It had been buried in quicklime.

The pains that the absconding couple had taken to destroy all traces of their victim's identity were wasted. Some false teeth which were found with the remains were conclusively proved to be those of O'Connor. A medical examination showed that a bullet had been fired through the head, and that the skull had been battered.

Superintendent Haynes at once began to make enquiries. Then, as now, organisation and common sense were the principal factors in their labours. At O'Connor's rooms it was found that Mrs. Manning had been a frequent visitor. Almost

immediately after the murder she had called there and rifled the place of all that was portable and valuable, including two gold watches and valuable securities. Nothing of value was left.

It was four days after O'Connor had vanished that Mrs. Manning, who appears to have kept all the loot to herself, left her husband in the lurch and took a stealthy departure. Two days later Manning himself managed to get away.

False trails by the legion cropped up to confuse the police, of course. Two people named Manning were found to have embarked on an emigrant ship for New York, and the admiral commanding at Portsmouth sent out a vessel in pursuit. In the early morning hours the other boat was overhauled and boarded.

There two perfectly inoffensive ladies were roused from their slumbers. The incident is referred to by Dickens in slightly different form. According to him, a police officer went below with the captain—"the whole steerage being abed and seasick—and engaged the Mrs. Manning who was on board in a conversation about her luggage, until she was, with no small pains, induced to raise her head and turn her face towards the light. Satisfied that she was not the object of his search, he quietly re-embarked on the Government steamer alongside, and steamed home with the intelligence."

Within a week a cabman who had driven Mrs. Manning away on the first stage of her flight was found. This was the first clue. She was traced to London Bridge Station, where she had left two boxes in the parcels office under the name of Mrs. Smith. The boxes were opened, and found to contain articles of clothing marked with her maiden name, and several small things that had belonged to O'Connor.

The trail then led to Euston. There, two railway officials remembered a woman answering to her description in an Edinburgh train on the evening of her flight. A telegram was sent to Edinburgh, but already the police there had become suspicious of a Mrs. Smith, who had tried to dispose of certain bonds in that city. She was promptly arrested.

Meanwhile the enquiries after Manning proceeded. It was reported that he had been seen on a Channel Islands steamboat, and a sergeant named Langley, who knew Manning, was immediately sent to Jersey to investigate. What he learned there on landing convinced him that he was on the right trail, and though it was late at night he insisted on going at

once to the little village outside St. Helier and capturing his man.

Manning was brought back to London, and he and his wife were put upon trial. The defence of each was to blame the other, but after a hearing that attracted enormous public interest they were both found guilty and hanged.

CHAPTER XXVI

DICKENS AND THE DETECTIVES

SCOTLAND YARD is always a little nervous about the Press. In the latest edition of the *Police Code* it is still laid down that officers are forbidden "to communicate in any manner, either directly or indirectly, with editors or reporters of newspapers on any matter connected with the public service *without express and special authority*."

It is difficult to imagine an editor bold enough to invite the detectives of London to discuss their business in general over cigars at a newspaper office. Nevertheless Dickens did it, and no harm seems to have resulted.

In any record of Scotland Yard some of these clean-cut pictures of the first London detectives left by the great novelist should find a place. They afford an invaluable perspective in any such survey.

His admiration and enthusiasm of the service were unstinted. He studied his men and came to have a thorough belief in them.

"As a connoisseur can determine the painter of a picture at the first glance, or a wine-taster the precise vintage of a sherry by the merest sip; so the Detective at once pounces upon the authors of the work of art under consideration by the style of the performance; if not upon the precise executant, upon the 'school' to which he belongs."

"Modus operandi" is obviously as old as detective work itself. In point of fact, as I have said in another part of this book, detective work in the individual has scarcely changed. It is only the machinery that has been altered and strengthened.

Dickens resumes. "Sometimes they are called upon to investigate robberies; so executed that no human ingenuity appears to ordinary observers capable of finding the thief. He leaves not a trail or a trace. Every clue seems cut off; but the experience of a Detective guides him into tracks quite invisible to other eyes. Not long since a trunk was rifled at a fashionable hotel. The theft was so managed that no suspicion could rest

upon anyone. The Detective sergeant who had been sent for, fairly owned, after making a minute examination of the case, that he could afford no hope of elucidating the mystery. As he was leaving the bedroom, however, in which the plundered portmanteau stood, he picked up an ordinary shirt-button from the carpet. He silently compared it with those of shirts in the trunk. It did not match them. He said nothing, but hung about the hotel for the rest of the day. Had he been narrowly watched he would have been set down for an eccentric critic of linen. He was looking out for a shirt-front or wristband without a button. His search was long and patient; but at length it was rewarded. One of the inmates of the house showed a deficiency in his dress, which no one but a detective would have noticed. He looked as narrowly as he dared at the pattern of the remaining fasteners. It corresponded with that of the little tell-tale he had picked up. He went deeper into the subject, got a trace of some of the stolen property, ascertained a connection between it and the suspected person, confronted him with the owner of the trunk, and finally succeeded in convicting him of the theft."

Dickens seems to have got his facts at first hand. The whole of the detective branch were invited to tea with him at the office of *Household Words*.

"Just at dusk Inspectors Wield and Stalker are announced; but we do not warrant the orthography of any of the names here mentioned. Inspector Wield presents Inspector Stalker. Inspector Wield is a middle-aged man of a portly presence, with a large moist knowing eye, a husky voice, and a habit of emphasising his conversation by the aid of a corpulent forefinger, which is constantly in juxtaposition with his eyes or nose. Inspector Stalker is a shrewd hard-headed Scotchman—in appearance not at all unlike a very acute, thoroughly-trained schoolmaster from the Normal Establishment at Glasgow. Inspector Wield one might have known, perhaps, for what he is—Inspector Stalker, never.

"... The sergeants are presented—five in number: Sergeant Dornton, Sergeant Witchem, Sergeant Mith, Sergeant Fendall, and Sergeant Straw. . . .

"The whole party are in plain clothes. Sergeant Dornton, about fifty years of age, with a ruddy face and a high sun-burnt forehead, has the air of one who has been a sergeant in the army. . . . He is famous for steadily pursuing the inductive process, and from small beginnings working on from clue to

clue until he bags his man. Sergeant Witchem, shorter and thicker set, and marked with the small-pox, has somewhat of a reserved and thoughtful air, as if he were engaged in deep arithmetical calculations. He is renowned for his acquaintance with the swell-mob. Sergeant Mith, a smooth-faced man with a fresh bright complexion, and a strange air of simplicity, is a dab at house-breakers. Sergeant Fendall, a light-haired, well-spoken polite person, is a prodigious hand at pursuing private enquiries of a delicate nature. . . . Straw, a little wiry Sergeant, of meek demeanour and strong sense, would knock at a door and ask a series of questions in any mild character you chose to prescribe to him, from a charity boy upwards, and seem as innocent as an infant. They are one and all respectable looking men; of perfectly good deportment and unusual intelligence; and with nothing lounging or slinking in their manners; with an air of keen observation and quick perception when addressed; and generally presenting in their faces, traces more or less marked of habitually leading lives of strong mental excitement. They have all good eyes; and they all can, and they all do, look at whomsoever they speak to."

An interruption to the novelist is necessary here to take the mask from the identities of some of these officers. Stalker, to start with, was not a detective. He was in the Statistical and Executive Branch of Scotland Yard, and his real name was Walker. Wield was Inspector Field, one of the ablest officers in the service, from whom, it is more than likely, Dickens drew the character of Inspector Bucket in "Bleak House." Dornton's real name was Thornton; and Sergeant Mith, who looked like a retired butcher to the day of his death, was Smith. Witchem was Whicher, a detective who distinguished himself later in many difficult cases, who trained Williamson, one of the cleverest heads of the detective service, and who left the service with a broken heart. Of him more will be told later.

At any stage during the last eighty years you might have found men such as Dickens describes among the detectives of Scotland Yard. They exist in the Criminal Investigation Department to-day. Listen to the story of Sergeant Witchem and the taking of Tally-ho Thompson:

"Tally-ho Thompson," says Sergeant Witchem, after wetting his lips with his brandy and water, "Tally-ho Thompson was a famous horse-stealer, couper, and magsman. Thompson in conjunction with a pal that occasionally worked with him gammoned a countryman out of a good round sum of money

under pretence of getting him a situation—the regular old dodge—and was afterwards in the ‘Hue and Cry’ for a horse—a horse that he stole down in Hertfordshire. I had to look after Thompson, and I applied myself, of course, in the first instance, to discovering where he was. Now, Thompson’s wife lived, along with a little daughter, at Chelsea. Knowing that Thompson was somewhere in the country, I watched the house—especially at post-time in the morning—thinking Thompson was pretty likely to write to her. Sure enough, one morning the postman comes up, and delivers a letter at Mrs. Thompson’s door. Little girl opens the door, and takes it in. We’re not always sure of postmen, though the people at the post-offices are always very obliging. A postman may help us, or he may not—just as it happens. However, I go across the road, and I say to the postman, after he has left the letter, ‘Good morning! How are you?’ ‘How are *you*?’ says he. ‘You’ve just delivered a letter for Mrs. Thompson.’ ‘Yes, I have.’ ‘You didn’t happen to remark what the postmark was, perhaps?’ ‘No,’ says he, ‘I didn’t.’ ‘Come,’ says I, ‘I’ll be plain with you. I’m in a small way of business, and I have given Thompson credit, and I can’t afford to lose what he owes me. I know he’s got money, and I know he’s in the country, and if you could tell me what the postmark was, I should be very much obliged to you, and you’d do a service to a tradesman in a small way of business that can’t afford a loss.’ ‘Well,’ he said, ‘I do assure you that I did not observe what the postmark was; all I know is that there was money in the letter—I should say a sovereign.’ This was enough for me, because I knew, of course, that Thompson having sent his wife money, it was probable that she’d write to Thompson, by return of post, to acknowledge the receipt. So I said ‘Thankee’ to the postman, and I kept on the watch. In the afternoon I saw the little girl come out. Of course I followed her. She went to a stationer’s shop, and I needn’t say to you that I looked in at the window. She bought some writing paper and envelopes, and a pen. I think to myself, ‘That’ll do!’—watch her home again—and don’t go away you may be sure, knowing that Mrs. Thompson was writing her letter to Tally-ho, and that the letter would be posted presently. In about an hour or so, out came the little girl again, with the letter in her hand. I went up and said something to the child, whatever it might have been; but I couldn’t see the direction of the letter, because she held it with the seal upwards. How-

ever, I observed that on the back of the letter there was what we call a kiss—a drop of wax by the side of the seal—and again, you understand, that was enough for me. I saw her post the letter, waited till she was gone, then went into the shop and asked to see the Master. When he came out I told him, ‘Now, I’m an Officer in the Detective Force; there’s a letter with a kiss been posted here just now, for a man that I’m in search of; and what I have to ask of you is that you will let me look at the direction of that letter.’ He was very civil—took a lot of letters from the box in the window—shook ’em out on the counter with the faces downwards—and there among ’em was the identical letter with the kiss. It was directed: Mr. Thomas Pigeon, Post-Office, B——, to be left till called for. Down I went to B—— (a hundred and twenty miles or so) that night. Early next morning I went to the Post-Office; saw the gentleman in charge of that department; told him who I was; and that my object was to see, and track, the party that should come for the letter to Mr. Thomas Pigeon. He was very polite and said, ‘You shall have every assistance we can give you; you can wait inside the office; and we will take care to let you know when anybody comes for the letter.’ Well, I waited there three days, and began to think that nobody ever *would* come. At last the clerk whispered to me, ‘Here! Detective! Somebody’s come for the letter!’ ‘Keep him a minute,’ said I, and I ran round to the outside of the office. There I saw a young chap with the appearance of an ostler, holding a horse by the bridle—stretching the bridle across the pavement, while he waited at the post-office window for the letter. I began to pat the horse and that; and I said to the boy, ‘Why, this is Mr. Jones’s mare!’ ‘No it an’t.’ ‘No?’ said I. ‘She’s very like Mr. Jones’s mare!’ ‘She an’t Mr. Jones’s mare, anyhow,’ says he. ‘It’s Mr. So-and-so’s of the Warwick Arms.’ And up he jumped, and off he went—letter and all. I got a cab, followed on the box, and was so quick after him that I came into the stable-yard of the Warwick Arms by one gate, just as he came in by another. I went into the bar, where there was a young woman serving, and called for a glass of brandy-and-water. . . . He came in directly and handed her the letter. She casually looked at it without saying anything, and stuck it up behind the glass, over the chimney-piece. What was to be done next?

“I turned it over in my mind while I drank my brandy-and-water (looking pretty sharp at the letter the while), but I

couldn't see my way out of it at all. I tried to get lodgings in the house, but there had been a horse-fair, or something of that sort, and it was full. I was obliged to put up somewhere else, but I came backwards and forwards to the bar for a couple of days, and there was the letter, always behind the glass. At last I thought I'd write a letter to Mr. Pigeon myself and see what that would do. So I wrote one, and posted it, but I purposely addressed it Mr. John Pigeon, instead of Mr. Thomas Pigeon, to see what *that* would do. In the morning (a very wet morning it was) I watched the postman down the street, and cut into the bar, just before he reached the Warwick Arms. In he came presently with my letter. 'Is there a Mr. John Pigeon staying here?' 'No!—stop a bit, though,' says the barmaid; and she took down the letter behind the glass. 'No,' says she, 'it's Thomas, and *he* is not staying here. Would you do me a favour and post this for me as it is so wet?' The postman said 'Yes'; she folded it in another envelope, directed it, and gave it to him. He put it in his hat, and away he went.

"I had no difficulty in finding out the direction of that letter. It was addressed to Mr. Thomas Pigeon, Post Office, R——, Northamptonshire, to be left till called for. Off I started directly for R——; I said the same at the Post-Office there as I had at B——; and again I waited three days before anybody came. At last another chap on horseback came. 'Any letters for Mr. Thomas Pigeon?' 'Where do you come from?' 'New Inn, near R——.' He got the letter and away *he* went—at a canter.

"I made my enquiries about the New Inn, near R——, and hearing it was a solitary sort of house, a little in the horse line, about a couple of miles from the station, I thought I'd go and have a look at it. I found it what it had been described, and sauntered in, to look about me. The landlady was in the bar, and I was trying to get into conversation with her; asked her how business was, and spoke about the wet weather, and so on; when I saw through an open door three men sitting by the fire in a sort of parlour, or kitchen; and one of these men, according to the description I had of him, was Tally-ho Thompson!

"I went and sat down among 'em, and tried to make things agreeable; but they were very shy—wouldn't talk at all—looked at me, and at one another, in a way quite the reverse of sociable. I reckoned 'em up, and finding that they were all three bigger men than me, and considering that their looks were ugly—that it was a lonely place—railroad station two miles off—and night

coming on—thought I couldn't do better than have a drop of brandy-and-water to keep my courage up. So I called for brandy-and-water; and as I was sitting drinking it by the fire Thompson got up and went out.

“Now the difficulty of it was that I wasn't sure it *was* Thompson, because I had never set eyes on him before. However, there was nothing for it now but to follow, and put a bold face upon it. I found him talking, outside in the yard, with the landlady. It turned out, afterwards, that he was wanted by a Northampton officer for something else, and that, knowing that officer to be pockmarked (as I am myself) he mistook me for him. As I have observed, I found him talking to the landlady outside. I put my hand upon his shoulder—this way—and said, ‘Tally-ho Thompson, it's no use. I know you. I'm an officer from London, and I take you into custody for felony!’ ‘That be d——d!’ says Tally-ho Thompson.

“We went back into the house, and the two friends began to cut up rough, and their looks didn't please me at all, I assure you. ‘Let the man go. What are you going to do with him?’ ‘I'll tell you what I am going to do with him. I'm going to take him to London to-night as sure as I'm alive. I'm not alone here, whatever you may think. You mind your own business, and keep yourselves to yourselves. It'll be better for you, for I know you both very well.’ I'd never seen or heard of 'em in all my life, but my bouncing cowed 'em a bit, and they kept off, while Thompson was making ready to go. I thought to myself, however, that they might be coming after me on the dark road to rescue Thompson; so I said to the landlady, ‘What men have you got in the house, Missis?’ ‘We haven't got no men here,’ she says sulkily. ‘You have got an ostler, I suppose?’ ‘Yes, we've got an ostler.’ ‘Let me see him.’ Presently he came, and a shaggy-headed young fellow he was. ‘Now attend to me, young man,’ says I; ‘I'm a Detective Officer from London. This man's name is Thompson. I have taken him into custody for felony. I'm going to take him to the railroad station. I call upon you, in the Queen's name, to assist me; and mind you, my friend, you'll get yourself into more trouble than you know of if you don't!’ You never saw a person open his eyes so wide. ‘Now, Thompson, come along!’ says I. But when I took out the handcuffs, Thompson cries, ‘No! None of that! I won't stand *them*! I'll go along with you quiet, but I won't bear none of that!’ ‘Tally-ho Thompson,’ I said, ‘I'm willing to behave as a man to you, if

you are willing to behave as a man to me. Give me your word that you'll come peaceably along, and I don't want to handcuff you.' 'I will,' says Thompson, 'but I'll have a glass of brandy first.' 'I don't care if I've another,' said I. 'We'll have two more, Missis,' said the friends, 'and confound you, Constable, you'll give your man a drop, won't you?' I was agreeable to that, and so we had it all round, and then my man and I took Tally-ho Thompson safe to the railroad, and I carried him to London that night. He was afterwards acquitted, on account of a defect in the evidence; and I understand he always praises me up to the skies, and says I'm one of the best of men."

Whicher, the hero of this story, had his pocket picked on his way home after this recital.

There are other stories of this little gathering recorded by Dickens. Inspector Field lured a suspected forger into a horse and trap, which was ostensibly for sale, and on pretext of showing the horse drove him by a spot where a witness was concealed to identify him. "Burn my body, if this ain't *too* bad," asserted the forger, when he learned that the drive was to end at the police station.

Sergeant Smith related how he was shown round London in the guise of an innocent young journeyman butcher from the country, while running down a gang of warehouse thieves, and the consternation of the prisoners when he appeared to give evidence against them. "And when I stepped into the box, in full police uniform, and the whole party saw how they had been done, actually a groan of horror and dismay proceeded from 'em in the dock."

CHAPTER XXVII

A DETECTIVE'S TRAGEDY

THERE are dangers in a detective's life which the ordinary man in the street may find it hard to understand. These are not the ordinary physical risks which every police officer may on occasion encounter, but very much more subtle and harassing perils.

There is a grim, ironic edge to the story of the last case of Jonathan Whicher (the *Witchem* of Dickens). In the years that elapsed after the tea-party at *Household Words* office he had come to be recognised as at the top of his profession. He had become an inspector, and so far as detective work went was the trusted favourite of Sir Richard Mayne. His record was one of almost unbroken success.

One June morning in 1860 the household of a Mr. Kent, living at the village of Road, in Somersetshire, were alarmed by the discovery that a four-year-old boy was missing from his cot. A drawing-room window was opened.

With the possibility that the child had been kidnapped before their minds, the family sent for the police, and began a frantic search. Before the police arrived, however, the body of the boy had been found. He had obviously been murdered. A blanket had been wrapped round the body, and it had been hidden in an outhouse in a shrubbery.

The mystery of this poor child at once claimed the widest public interest. In the baffling drama that was to follow scarce a move was made that was not accompanied by widespread comment and criticism. Suspicion lay upon every inmate of the house, and shifted almost aimlessly from one to the other.

Mr. Kent had been married twice. There were three children by his first wife—who had died in a lunatic asylum—and three by his second, of whom the murdered boy was one. These children, his second wife and himself, and three servants, comprised the household. What motive could have possibly actuated any of them to such a crime?

The first police officer upon the scene was Foley, a superintendent of the local constabulary. If a foil had been sought to the quiet, astute Whicher, none more complete could have been found. He was an epitome of blundering incapacity, an untrained, illiterate countryman, a nineteenth-century Dogberry. He fussily took charge and made a search. One of the results of that was the discovery of a woman's bloodstained garment in a boiler in the kitchen. The egregious Foley decided that this discovery was of no moment. By a fluke he was right, but the odds were against him.

For some days nothing happened. The case was discussed from one end of the country to the other. Three people in the house were more or less openly discussed as being probably inculpated—Mr. Kent, his sixteen-year-old daughter Constance, and the nursemaid, Elizabeth Gough. After ten days of completely futile muddling Foley arrested Elizabeth Gough, apparently on the principle that he was expected to do something. There was scarcely the thread of a case against her, and the magistrates dismissed the case.

In the ordinary march of events a crime in Somersetshire would be outside the jurisdiction of Scotland Yard. But so stirred was public opinion, that the Home Office ordered Sir Richard Mayne to send down his best man to try to clear up the mystery.

Whicher was inevitably selected. If he read the newspapers he would probably have had some general idea of the complexity of the mystery with which he had to deal. *The Times*, for example, had, before he was called in, a leading article in which it was hinted in set terms that no other than Mr. Kent himself was the murderer.

Whicher slipped quietly down to the neighbourhood of Road. He started at Frome gathering such facts as he thought would be of value. The local police of that day were probably not too pleased to have a London man dabbling in what they deemed their concern. Some of this local resentment is, indeed, felt at the present day when a chief inspector from Scotland Yard is sent to the provinces. So it is not to be wondered at that Jonathan Whicher played a lone hand. Foley never even mentioned to him that a bloodstained piece of clothing had been found.

Whicher kept his ear to the ground, and listened readily to the local gossip. He had several talks with Mr. Kent and others who might be supposed to be able to throw some light

on the crime. Suspicions dimly formed in his mind began to take a focus.

There were a number of people, any one of whom at a first glance might have committed the murder. Whicher studied the circumstances in regard to each one, until he had eliminated all but Constance Kent. On a balance of probabilities he was reduced to the belief that she had killed her half-brother.

It was one thing to make up his mind on the case, but quite another to be able to convince a jury that he was right. From a legal point of view all that he had to base his conclusion upon was very thin probability. Constance's mother had died insane. The girl had made querulous complaints to her schoolfellows of her stepmother's harshness. This was sheer imagination. The second Mrs. Kent had acted in quite a reasonable and decent way towards her stepchildren. All the same, Whicher was convinced that the girl nursed a grievance against her father's second family. It was a flimsy enough motive for murder, but then it was hard to imagine any substantial motive for the murder of the tiny boy. More trivial impulses even than this silly jealousy have, as Whicher knew, actuated to murder.

Before he could take the extreme step of placing her under arrest, however, there had to be something more substantial. It was obvious that whoever had killed the boy could not have escaped without bloodstains of some kind on his or her clothes. With this at the back of his mind, the detective examined the wardrobe of Constance Kent. There was nothing there that tended to incriminate her.

The murder had taken place during the night. It was therefore extremely probable that the girl had been wearing night-clothes. To this point Whicher turned his attention. He learned that the girl should have three night-dresses. Only two could be discovered. What more likely, if she was guilty, than that she should have destroyed the third, and blood-stained, garment?

He asked Constance where her third night-dress was. She replied that it had been lost at the laundry. For the moment Whicher accepted this answer. But he endeavoured to find out something about the laundry system of the family.

On the Monday following the murder a maid had collected the previous week's soiled linen. Constance had handed her a used night-dress, and followed her, as if by chance, to the stair-head, where the linen basket was standing. Then it was

that she had asked the maid to fetch her a drink of water. If Whicher was right, during the maid's absence Constance had abstracted the night-dress from the basket.

The maid had not noticed any disturbance of the contents of the basket; but the laundress, who ultimately took it away, was certain that the night-dress was not in it. The night-dress was in fact never seen again.

On these facts Whicher felt that he had case enough to justify an arrest. There has been discussion, to this day, as to his justification. But he certainly had a *prima facie* case at least as strong as that on which many criminals have been arrested since. It should not be forgotten that in cases of murder, it is not infrequent for the really damning and conclusive evidence to be established after the arrest. Many instances might be cited in which this has happened. Whicher acted as most conscientious officers would have acted.

Constance broke into a storm of tears when she was taken into custody. "I am innocent! I am innocent!" she asserted.

Whicher was unable to convince the local bench of magistrates that he had a sufficient case to warrant sending the girl for trial. She does not seem to have been absolutely discharged—after-events could not have occurred if she had—but she was released on her father's bail, to appear if called upon, amid a storm of popular applause.

Many people followed the example of counsel for the defence, who bitterly attacked Whicher on these lines:

"There was not one tittle of evidence against her, not one word on which the finger of evidence could be pointed against her. Although a most atrocious murder had been committed, it had been followed by a judicial murder not less atrocious. If the murderer were never discovered it would never be forgotten that this young lady had been dragged like a common felon to Devizes Gaol. The fact alone was quite sufficient to ensure the sympathy of every man in the county and in the kingdom. The steps which had been taken must blast her hopes and prospects for life, and those steps had been taken solely on the suspicions of an inspector of police, acting under the influence of the reward which had been offered. The fact respecting the missing bed-gown had been cleared up to the satisfaction of everyone who had heard the evidence that day, and no doubt could remain that this little peg, upon which this fearful charge had been grounded, had fallen to the ground.

He asked the magistrates, therefore, to pause and say whether for one moment longer this young lady should be kept in custody. Without reproaching Inspector Whicher for what he had done, he must say that the hunting up the school-fellows of Miss Constance Kent reflected ineffable disgrace upon those who had been the means of bringing them there. Nothing that had been elicited from these young ladies showed anything like animus on the part of the prisoner towards the deceased child, nor had any motive been established which would induce the prisoner to imbrue her hands in the blood of the poor little child. He appealed to the Bench, therefore, the case for the prosecution being exhausted—and a weaker one he had never heard—to perform their duty to the country and to the prisoner by at once saying that the evidence adduced satisfied them that the charge was groundless, and that Miss Constance Kent should at once be discharged.”

This vicious attack on Whicher at once set the key. The detective returned to London, doggedly certain that he was right, but in the eyes of the world a discredited and broken man. He was abused and ridiculed in the newspapers. Even in the House of Commons there were questions, and there seems to have been little disposition to defend him from the charge of having acted in the most objectionable manner. Sir Richard Mayne—and it is the worst thing we know about him—appears to have accepted the popular verdict, and Whicher lost favour at Scotland Yard. In a little he retired, all his good service weighing as nothing against the popular clamour.

The insistent outcry that the case should be probed to the bottom went on. But Scotland Yard was not called in again. Instead, a Bath solicitor held some queer sort of judicial investigation, as a result of which Elizabeth Gough, the nurse-maid, was again arrested. Once more she was discharged. On this occasion the prosecuting counsel referred to the case against Constance Kent:

“After having investigated very carefully, and very clearly, the particulars of this case, I have come to the conclusion, which I am sure every person would come to who carefully examined into it, that there was not the slightest shadow of suspicion against the young lady.”

Time went on, and the case dropped into the list of unsolved murder mysteries. Whicher, eating his heart out, a ruined man, was forgotten. The Kent family abandoned Road, and

Constance was sent to France to finish her education. She was a woman when, five years later, she came back to England, and took up her residence at St. Mary's Home at Brighton. There she came under the influence of a High Church clergyman. The day came when the world learned with a shock of surprise that she had confessed to this man that she, after all, was the person guilty of the Road murder. Whicher, the reviled, the ridiculed detective, had, after all, been right.

The girl gave herself up to the police—and it is of interest to note that one of those who had charge of her was Whicher's pupil, the then Chief Detective Inspector Williamson—and was brought up at Bow Street. There she handed to the Clerk the following written confession:

"I, Constance Emile Kent, alone and unaided, murdered at Road Hill House, one, Francis Savile Kent. Before the act was done nobody knew of my intention, nor afterwards of my guilt. No one assisted me in the crime, nor in the evasion of discovery."

If she had been actually discharged by the Somersetshire magistrates on the charge of murder, confession or no confession, she could not have been put on her trial again. No one may be placed in jeopardy twice for the same offence. But her release had not amounted to a dismissal, and consequently she was put on her trial for murder on her own confession, and convicted. The capital sentence was commuted to penal servitude for life.

She made a full confession in which every deduction drawn by Detective Inspector Whicher was justified. The crime had been committed with one of her father's razors. On the night of the crime she had undressed and gone to bed. A little after midnight she had opened the drawing-room windows. She had taken the sleeping child from his cot and carried him out. After the murder she returned to her bedroom, and there examining her night-dress, found two spots of blood. These she attempted to wash out. In the morning, finding the night-gown dry, she folded it and placed it in a drawer. Both Superintendent Foley and a doctor had scrutinised this night-dress when the crime came to light, and had noticed no marks upon it. The girl herself, however, on a re-examination, noticed that stains were still showing, so she abstracted it from the linen basket when she sent the servant for a glass of water, and afterwards burnt it in her bedroom, putting the ashes in the kitchen grate.

It was, in fact, one of those crimes of adolescence now well understood by medical science. Never was a detective vindicated more thoroughly. Whicher lived long enough to learn that his reputation had been rehabilitated, but he died soon after. Whether or no his death was due to a broken heart, as has been asserted, one may use licence in describing him as a victim of duty.

CHAPTER XXVIII

DIVISIONAL DETECTIVES

THE Metropolitan Police was brought into being with sudden and bold comprehensiveness. Alterations to the system were simply matters of detail. The structure itself stood.

With the detective system it was quite another thing. In many ways and for many years the detective was looked upon as a sort of police luxury. So far as a detective force of trained men was concerned we had scarcely progressed beyond the Bow Street runner idea for forty years after the London Police was created. Right up till 1869 the number of detectives at the disposal of Scotland Yard never exceeded fifteen, although there were a number of plain clothes men. The Scotland Yard officers at this time were in a sense free-lances in crime detection. They worked as individuals, with scarcely any control, and little assistance.

One of the first things Sir Edmund Henderson did in taking the saddle as Commissioner in 1869 was to follow the example of the City of London Police in establishing divisional detectives. This was an immense step forward, although it seems doubtful if sufficient care was taken to ensure that close co-operation that we have learned to regard as so essential to criminal investigation. Sir Edmund seems to have had some doubt as to the way in which this development of the investigation system would be received. He wrote:

“Detection of crime is, after repression, a most important part of the duty of a Police Force. At best the Police can only make clean the outside of the platter; the improvement of the morals and the manners of the people must be left to higher agencies, and practically the Police cannot hope to do more than prevent a certain proportion of crime in such an enormous aggregation as London.

“There are many and great difficulties in the way of a Detective system; it is one viewed with the greatest suspicion and jealousy by the majority of Englishmen, and is, in fact,

entirely foreign to the habits and feelings of the Nation. The Members of a Detective Force necessarily work in secret, away from supervision and control, and the greatest care and circumspection is required in their selection, and in seeing as far as possible that their duty is honestly and faithfully performed.

“The only Detective Force prior to 1869 in the Metropolitan Police Force consisted of fifteen persons. They were stationed at Scotland Yard, and employed on all enquiries of importance. They were and are a very able and thoroughly trustworthy body. Numerically they were inadequate to the constant demands made upon them. The enormous mass of enquiries and investigations made for the Government on important matters, and the daily calls upon them arising in the Metropolis, prevented their employment in the detection of matters of scarcely less importance. Policemen were detailed from time to time in the different divisions in plain clothes to act as Detectives; but when not so employed they appeared in uniform, and as they were being continually changed, much of their usefulness was impaired.”

So it came about that 180 detectives were appointed to the divisions, and twenty-seven men added to the staff of Scotland Yard. The pay, which the Commissioner regarded as “liberal,” was not grossly extravagant. A divisional detective constable—and there were 160 of these—got 32s. a week; a first-class detective sergeant £3 2s. 8d.; a detective inspector £4 6s. 11d.; and a chief detective inspector £5 6s. 2d.

On the whole, the experiment was a success from the beginning. “During the six months subsequent to their appointment,” said Sir Edmund Henderson, “the number of persons arrested by the Divisional Detectives was 2,416, and the convictions were 1,533, or 63·4 per cent. A large proportion of these arrests were made in consequence of the commission of more serious crimes, and the large proportion of convictions is proof of the sagacity and discretion with which the enquiries were pursued. It is also satisfactory to state that during those six months no complaint was made against any of the Detective Force, and that, on the contrary, in many instances the Detective Officers have been commended by the Judges and Police Magistrates.”

Two of the newly appointed officers gave early and dramatic proof of their capacity. The “cat” burglar of to-day is no new performer; indeed, he is almost as old as crime itself. In

the time of Detectives George Ranger and James Ham, of the P Division, he was known as a "portico thief." Now portico thieving in the suburbs was then quite a fashionable occupation among the criminal fraternity. It was conducted with great audacity, generally in the afternoon or evening when respectable citizens and their families were at home. An entry would be made by a fanlight or window, and the upper rooms rifled. Strange as it may seem, the thieves invariably managed to enter and leave unseen.

"In nearly all cases," says a police report of the period, "the thieves committing this class of larceny are well dressed, keeping their own horses and traps, mostly at livery stables. Some of the carts are made with a box under the seat, the top of which contains cigars, etc., as if travellers, while under this is a false bottom containing house-breaking instruments; in this manner they drive about the suburbs without suspicion, sometimes with a very dressy lady."

Now one of the most daring and imaginative rogues who ran this sort of business was one "Black Miles," *alias* Miles Ambler, *alias* William Simpson. He was, in fact, a receiver and organiser of crime on a wholesale scale, and until he fell foul of Ranger and Ham, had always managed to elude justice.

Some of his ingenuities are worthy of record. After his gang had stolen a thousand pounds' worth of stamps from an office at Huddersfield, they raided a factory at Bradford and got away with hundreds of pounds' worth of silks, satins, and other materials. The problem of hiding this bulky loot until it could be safely disposed of was met by the happy device of taking it to a chapel some two miles away, cutting away the floor beneath the pulpit, packing the plunder there, and carefully replacing the boards.

In another case Black Miles and his confederates leisurely loaded two carts with cloth from a warehouse at Kirkheaton, and drove away. One cart broke down and had to be abandoned. The other was driven some seventeen miles to the village of Wood. There in the churchyard wooden tombstones were removed, and the stolen goods hidden beneath them.

This was the man whom Ranger and Ham suspected of being the brain behind many of the portico thieves in their division. They kept close and unobtrusive watch upon him, and their suspicions were confirmed when they found that he was in

close and intimate association with another first-class criminal mind, William Critchley.

Opportunity came at last. Black Miles made an incautious step. The two detectives seized him and another man named William Green for being in possession of a gold watch believed to have been stolen. There is no doubt that the detectives were quite justified in making the apprehension, but they had something much bigger in view. No sooner was Black Miles safely under lock and key than they paid a visit to his house, and were there rewarded by finding a considerable quantity of goods, which they had little doubt were stolen.

Here the plot thickens. Critchley, for reasons of his own that quite likely had little to do with sentiment, was anxious to save the skin of Black Miles. He employed an emissary to get into touch with the detectives, a man named Thomas Richards.

Ham consulted his superintendent and a trap was laid. One May evening he met Richards near the Elephant and Castle. They went to a neighbouring public-house, had some refreshment, and then walked arm in arm down the street.

"Jimmy," said Richards, "I'll tell you what I want to speak to you about. You and Ranger have got old Black Miles and Jimmy Green, haven't you?"

The officer gave a laconic affirmative.

"I suppose you don't want to get them convicted, do you?"

"Not particularly," agreed Ham.

"Well," went on the suave agent, "old Billy Critchley has been down to me, and he wanted me to see Potter (an inspector), but I said, 'No, that won't do.' Now look here, Jimmy, old Billy says you can have twenty quid, and no one shall know anything about it except you, me, and Ranger. You can let the poor devils get turned up. You are sure to have them later on for something better. The stuff you found hasn't got an owner yet. We can send some party down to buff (identify) for it; and you can easily say before the Magistrate that you've made enquiry about the property, and you believe it belongs to the prisoner in court."

Ham was apparently willing enough to listen to these blandishments. A time was fixed for the money to be handed over, and on the appointed day Ham and Ranger met Richards.

The emissary was asked if he had brought the money, but he shook his head. "No; you must get the men turned up first. We'll leave the money with the landlord of the ——."

He gave the name of a thieves' well-known rendezvous. "When the men are turned up you can go there and collar the quids."

This did not at all suit the views of the detectives. They protested, and Richards said: "Well, old Billy Critchley won't part with it. I'll go down and fetch him, and you shall settle it your own way."

Nothing could have suited the officers better. They had, in fact, made arrangements for as complete a clean-up as possible. Unobtrusively shadowing them were some of their colleagues ready to act upon a signal. Both Ranger and Ham had been searched ere they left the police station so that it might be proved they had no money upon them when they entered the public-house.

In a little Richards returned with Critchley and another well-known thief known as "the Barrister." The master rogue was affable. "Tom tells me, Mr. Ranger," he observed, "that you is a perfect gentleman; but I don't know you as well as I do Jimmy."

He thrust his hand into his trousers pocket and brought out twenty sovereigns, which he passed to Richards, who handed ten each to Ham and Ranger. With a nod of farewell he passed out, and fell into the grip of two officers who were ready for him at the door. At the same time Ham and Ranger seized the astonished Richards.

It seems a pity that the three principals in this affair were only given two years' imprisonment each. That, however, does not affect the credit which is due to the detectives.

Critchley had made a fortune as a receiver. He owned a large number of houses, and lived in good style at Brixton. A police report declared him to be "connected with first-class thieves all over the world, and advanced money to them to go to foreign countries to commit robberies. Numerous papers relating to transactions with thieves in France, Spain, Germany, and America were found upon him."

This was far from being the end of the business. For the enquiries resulting from the arrest of Black Miles and Critchley, and the vigilance with which their houses were watched, resulted in the accumulation of evidence through which a dozen men or so—practically the whole of the "portico thieves" in London—were arrested and sentenced.

The divisional detectives in the early years of their establishment were under no central control. Scotland Yard looked

after its own headquarters detectives, the divisions after their own.

The head of what would now be called the Central Branch of the detective force was Superintendent Frederick Williamson, who had joined the force in 1850. He was very much trusted and did pretty well as he pleased in his department. The son of a police officer, he was far from the type of the detective of fiction. One of his colleagues thus described him:

"A Scot from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, loyal, hardworking, persevering, phlegmatic, obstinate, unenthusiastic, courageous, always having his own opinion, never afraid to express it, slow to grasp a new idea, doubtful of its efficacy, seeing its disadvantages rather than its advantages, but withal so clear-headed and so honest, and kind-hearted to a fault, he was a most upright and valuable public servant."

Williamson, so far as any man may claim the credit, was the creator of the modern detective. He was a link between the old system and the new, and though he was many years later given the rank of Chief Constable—the first of the very few to reach that office from the ranks—it cannot be said that he reaped the full reward of his consummate ability and knowledge. No Scotland Yard man has ever received so many tributes from superiors, colleagues, and subordinates.

He was the ideal type for the head of a detective bureau, and they called him "the Philosopher." From his desk he could direct the investigation of a complicated case in all its ramifications with the ease and certainty of a master playing a game of chess. This taciturn man, with his love of flowers and boating, had a faculty for getting at the heart of things, and without melodrama or ostentation was responsible for the solution of many, many crimes. Before the detective scandal, which is dealt with in another chapter, he had the most implicit belief and confidence in his subordinates, but it is a tribute to his memory that that affair, which shook the detective service to its roots, never sullied his reputation by a breath of suspicion. He died after the Criminal Investigation Department had been created and become established on a firm footing, "worn out," as a Commissioner of Police said, "before his time by the constant strain of very harassing work."

A glimpse of the work of the Detective Department under him in the year 1872 shows that its labours, though heavy enough, had not become so arduous as later years were to make them. There were but two arrests for murder, and five for

burglary. The total of arrests effected for all offences was 115, as against 6,224 by the divisional detectives, and 78,203 by the whole of the Metropolitan Police. But there were other duties for the Scotland Yard men. Government departments called upon them for special duties which involved visits far from London. Officers were sent abroad on missions of enquiry, and there were investigations of crimes that took place in the provinces. Altogether Williamson put the enquiries made by the Detective Department at Scotland Yard at 1,040 for the year.

The experienced detectives of the Yard were not, apparently, too pleased with the changes brought about by Henderson. No doubt there was some prejudice in this, the more particularly as the new Commissioner, who held military rank, introduced four district superintendents who were also from the Army. I should say here that the fears of a military regime in this case proved to be utterly unfounded. Nevertheless there was some foundation for anxiety.

"Consternation," wrote a detective inspector, after he had left the service, "pervaded the whole body of the Metropolitan Police when it was learned that in addition to a military Chief Commissioner they were to have imposed upon them four district superintendents, also military men. . . . The men imported possessed no single qualification for their offices calculated to inspire their subordinates with either confidence or respect. Of the detection and prevention of crime, the chief reason for the existence of the police, they knew nothing. . . . But neither the discontent in the force nor a certain degree of grumbling on the part of the public influenced the Government in the least. Colonel Henderson, then head of the Convict Department, was appointed Chief Commissioner, and four other Army officers were, with a kind of farcical humour, appointed to direct and control experienced police officials.

"Colonel Henderson himself, the Chief Commissioner, was a gentleman not only in standing but in nature, and, conscious of his own lack of experience, consulted freely with those best able to advise him. But his superintendents were not blessed with his *savoir faire*.

"An experience of my own may be given. A series of undiscovered robberies occurred in the West End. I was sent over to the assistance of the divisional police.

"The district superintendent and a divisional sergeant had

been very active in pursuing enquiries on the scene of each of the robberies, and both had come to the conclusion that the last burglary could only have been committed by the servants. So far as I could see there was not a shadow of foundation for that conclusion, and I remonstrated strongly with both for giving utterance to such an opinion without proof, pointing out what a serious thing it was to sow distrust and suspicion, not only between employers and servants, but among the servants themselves. On making a close examination of the premises I soon discovered what was at least good *prima facie* evidence of the innocence of the maligned servants of the house. The robbery had been made from the first floor, and there, on the iron flower-frame on a window sill, was the distinct mark of the hook of a rope ladder. The iron frame where it had been chafed by the hook still showed clear and bright. The superintendent had to admit the fact when his attention was drawn to it, though how it escaped even his amateurish investigations one could hardly understand. It would never have been overlooked by a competent officer, but it has occurred to me since that the sergeant, if he remarked it, may, nevertheless, have thought it politic to concur in the very definite opinion of his superior officer.

"At all events, any suspicion entertained against the servants was at once dismissed, much to the satisfaction of the owner of the house. We had left the house only a few paces behind us when the superintendent, who had evidently been 'nursing his wrath to keep it warm,' burst out hotly:

" 'You seem to contradict me in everything.'

"No doubt I looked rather astonished, as I actually was, for he continued with increasing anger: 'I say, you have done so in all these matters.'

" 'Yes, Colonel, I have,' I answered with quiet firmness. 'I'm a practical policeman, you're not. If I were merely to say "yes" to your "yes," and "no" to your "no," I should only deceive you, which I have no intention of doing.'

"I may add that, as I surmised, the perpetrators of these robberies were afterwards discovered to be a gang of experienced portico thieves."

CHAPTER XXIX

THE SCOTLAND YARD SCANDAL

THE blackest page in the history of Scotland Yard was written in the late seventies. For stark melodrama, for wild incredible happenings, it might have been the fantastic imagining of a sensational novelist. For in 1877 it was discovered that the highest and most trusted detectives of Scotland Yard itself were the paid tools of one of the most astute and unscrupulous gangs of rogues that have ever infested the earth.

It is necessary here to step aside and say a word of Harry Benson, one of the picturesque scoundrels concerned; indeed, the master mind in the whole business.

Benson was an Englishman, born in Paris, where his father was a respected business man. The first criminal exploit with which he is credited was the duping of the Lord Mayor of London, Mr. Alfred Rothschild, and Colonel Stuart Wortley, who were members of the French Relief Committee at the time of the Franco-German War. He posed as the Comte de Montague, and so plausible and convincing was he, that he succeeded in getting from them a cheque for £1,000, to be applied to the relief of war sufferers in the town of Chateaudun.

For this he was arrested, and while awaiting trial in Newgate he tried to commit suicide by setting fire to the bed in his cell. So terrible were his injuries that it was eight months before he could be tried, and then he had to be carried into court on a warder's back. Thereafter he was a hopeless cripple. He served a sentence of twelve months, and came out of prison an implacable enemy of society.

He then fell in with a William Kurr, a young man of twenty-three, who looked somewhat like a bluff farmer, but had had some considerable experience of the shady side of racing. Kurr, like Benson, was audacious and unscrupulous, but he lacked those qualities of imagination and subtlety which made the other so striking a figure among the great criminals of the nineteenth century.

The two ran various turf frauds together. The root idea

in most of these swindles was that the public should invest money in betting "systems." It need scarcely be said that the public saw none of its money back.

Benson soon acquired enough money to take a retreat at a delightful house, called "Rosebank," at Shanklin, in the Isle of Wight. There he called himself Yonge, and was supposed to be a scion of the French aristocracy. The best society of the place took him at his own valuation. Cripple though he was, his personality and manners well fitted him to maintain his pose.

No one could suppose this educated and cultured man to be a dangerous rogue. To all seeming he had not a care in the world. But his active wits were busy. He and Kurr issued a bogus newspaper, *Sport*, which was circulated extensively to possible dupes on the Continent. *Sport* was ostensibly the whim of a "Mr. Montgomery," who had made a fabulous fortune on the turf. So shrewd was his judgment that the bookmakers had combined to boycott him.

"We have protested," said *Sport*, in virtuous wrath, "and we shall never cease to protest until we have compelled these vultures [the bookmakers] to discontinue such unfair conduct, and until we have succeeded in obtaining justice for the commission agent." To meet the boycott of the bookmakers, therefore, the altruistic Mr. Montgomery was willing to allow agents abroad to bet for him under their own names, receiving a commission for their services. "This," explained *Sport*, "cannot be done in England, where the rules of the Jockey Club void a bet made in an assumed name."

There were found plenty of people to swallow this hook. Directly a person consented to act as agent a cheque—drawn on a non-existent bank—would be sent to him, with instruction to forward it to a certain bookmaker at an address in London. Presently the supposed bookmaker would return another cheque which represented the imaginary winnings. This would go on until the dupe was thoroughly impressed with the possibilities afforded by the knowing Mr. Montgomery. He would decide to risk something himself. He would win, but would be asked to hold over the cheques to a certain date in order to comply with British law. In the course of time the dupe would plunge on some race. Then Mr. Montgomery, otherwise Benson, Kurr and Co., would swiftly cash in, and that would be the last the get-rich-quick dupe would hear of them.



HARRY BENSON.



SUPERINTENDENT WILLIAMSON UNDER
CROSS-EXAMINATION.

In this way a French lady, the Comtesse de Goncourt, was swindled of £10,000. She innocently consulted her lawyer on a method of raising more money to be invested with Mr. Montgomery. The lawyer was less ingenuous. He cabled to Scotland Yard for information. Back came the laconic reply from Williamson, "The scheme is a fraud."

Williamson, once on the scent of a swindle of this nature, was not the man to let things hang fire. In the normal course of events he would have had the gang under lock and key in a short while. But things did not take a normal course. How should Williamson suspect that the men who had worked with him and under him, some of them for a lifetime, were in the pay of the very gang it was their business to run to earth?

Williamson put the matter in the hands of a detective inspector whose past record gave every reason for implicit confidence. This was Nathaniel Druscovich, an officer of foreign extraction, whose ability was unquestionable. He might well have been uneasy had he known that almost immediately afterwards Druscovich met Kurr near the entrance to Scotland Yard, and the following conversation took place:

"I am glad I have seen you," said the detective. "There is a big swindle come in from Paris—£10,000."

"Is it a racing affair?" asked Kurr.

"No, I don't think it is. It is something to do with some spurious bills of exchange."

"Keep the case in your hands," said Kurr.

"It is all right," Druscovich reassured him. "I have got all the papers in my desk."

Now this association had begun many years before when a Scotland Yard man, named John Meiklejohn, who, before his downfall, was to become a chief detective inspector, had begun to accept bribes from Kurr. Since that date Meiklejohn had been an invaluable ally to the swindlers. There can be little doubt, however, that it was Benson who improved on Kurr's schemes, and eventually brought very nearly the whole of the senior men at the Yard on to their pay roll.

The manner of the fall of Druscovich was this. Benson had long been anxious to "square" him, and urged the desirability among his confederates. It was the more important to "get at" Druscovich, since his knowledge of languages, and acquaintance with the Continent, usually brought him the foreign business of Scotland Yard. The exploits of Benson

and his friends were therefore likely to come under his eye. But Druscovich was difficult.

Luck gave the conspirators an opening. Druscovich, with his meagre pay of a few pounds a week, backed a bill for his brother. The amount was £60, and the time came when the detective was faced with the problem of meeting this. In his extremity he applied to Meiklejohn.

Meiklejohn was swift to see the opportunity. "I can't do it," he said regretfully. "But I think Bill Kurr would."

It is hard to suppose that Druscovich was entirely ignorant of Kurr's reputation, or that he swallowed whole Meiklejohn's description of Kurr as "an owner of racehorses and a perfect gentleman."

"Will he keep his mouth shut?" he asked.

"Oh yes," agreed the other. "I always go to him when I want money."

So a quiet meeting was arranged near Blackfriars Station. Druscovich was nervous as he accompanied Meiklejohn to the rendezvous. He was fearful that they might encounter Clarke, the senior chief detective inspector at Scotland Yard, and second in command to Williamson. "Don't be a fool," retorted Meiklejohn. "Bill has got them all right at our place, and in the City too."

Druscovich got his £60. The chain of precautions taken by the conspirators was complete, as far as they could make it, for, of course, they regarded Williamson as beyond corruption. "He is a calf; he will never tumble to it in a thousand years," declared Meiklejohn, who seems to have been more whole-hearted in his treason than the other officers.

There can be no question that the gang believed that they had Clarke under their thumb. He was acquitted when he was put on his trial, but many of his actions were certainly open to suspicion. Benson had drawn him down to his house at Shanklin when Clarke had become somewhat too active in regard to certain sham betting offices in which the cripple was interested. There, by a consummate mixture of tactful persuasion and veiled threats, Clarke was given to understand that it would be well to stand in with the gang. There was a compromising letter—a letter which had been photographed—which Clarke said was a purely innocent document in reference to some information given him about a burglary, but which Benson held to be the making of an appointment to receive a bribe of £100.

Innocent or not in this matter, it is likely that Clarke was shaken. He refused—to his credit—an offer of £100 made in the most delicate fashion by Benson, but he seems to have come to the conclusion that it would be well to maintain friendly relations with the daring cripple and his associates. He met them frequently, and there was an exchange of correspondence between himself and Benson on which a sinister construction might reasonably be placed. Two of these letters may be given as examples. Less than a couple of months after the interview at “Rosebank” Benson was writing:

“MY DEAR SIR AND BROTHER,

“We exchanged promises at our last interview. Yours was that you would give me an early opportunity of proving my friendship; mine that I would show you how kindly I feel towards you, and how anxious I am to pay my debt to you. I have also news of great importance to communicate to you about the letter you know of. I will show you how thoroughly you can trust me. Will you therefore oblige me by coming down as soon as possible—Thursday or Friday? By leaving Waterloo at 3 p.m. you can return next morning in time to be in your office by 10. A line from you in return announcing your visit as requested will oblige,

“Yours sincerely,

“G. H. Y.”

Benson was sticking to his pseudonym of Yonge. Clarke replied on the following day from his private address:

“No doubt you have heard that the two men, Walters and Murray, did not appear to take their trial, and have not been heard of since. I hear they have left the country. I should be glad to see you to talk over the matter, but I cannot spare the time this week. I feel that I want a run out somewhere for a blow. Kurr and Montague have also left the country.

“Yours truly,

“G. CLARKE.”

It is not easy to assume that this intimacy was entirely innocuous. On Benson's assertion Clarke had £50 in gold on his next visit, and promised information of any moves made by Scotland Yard.

Still another detective was drawn in—an inspector named Palmer. He, however, may be considered as much a dupe as a confederate. The probability is that there were others also concerned, for Benson and Kurr practised bribery on a wide scale, and hesitated at little. There was, for instance, an arrangement with certain post-office officials for timely warning in the event of the authorities scenting the use of the mails for fraud.

Having reached the end of their tether on the *Sport* swindle, the conspirators lost no time in attempting to smother their traces. Benson went to Scotland to change certain money into Clydesdale Bank notes. The useful Meiklejohn had afforded an introduction to a bank manager, and the idea was that as the Scotch notes bore no numbers they would be difficult to trace. On this point the gang made a miscalculation. As this Scottish paper was in such small circulation in England and abroad it afforded an even better clue than Bank of England notes.

It was while Benson was in Scotland that the storm burst. An alert solicitor named Abrahams began to look into the de Goncourt case, and Druscovich issued a warning. Things, from his point of view, were looking distinctly unpleasant. Kurr, confident that no evidence could be produced against him, received the news with equanimity. A meeting was arranged between Meiklejohn—who by this time had been transferred from Scotland Yard to the Midland Railway—Druscovich, and himself. This took place at the Midland Hotel, St. Pancras.

Druscovich was excited and uneasy. Warrants had been issued. The magistrate had urged him not to be particular whom he arrested. “I must arrest somebody,” he declared.

“Arrest me if you like,” said Kurr, coolly.

“I think I will,” said Druscovich. “You have not been seen at any of the places. Will you be at Fleet Street at one o’clock, coming out of the Albert Club, and I will bring Clarke, or somebody from our place, and arrest you.”

Kurr suggested that it would be more convenient to arrest him at his house in the evening. For some reason, however, this plan was not carried out. They separated, and Meiklejohn was instructed by Kurr—who, like Benson, did not entirely trust Druscovich—to “find out all about it.” A warning was sent to Benson.

The conscience-stricken Druscovich made a desperate effort

to disentangle himself from the web of intrigue during the next day or two. Kurr complained to Meiklejohn that he was getting no information from Druscovich, who was frightened to come near him. "Tell him," he said, "to make all his business known at Scotland Yard, and I am sure to know then from others."

It was thought advisable to "sweeten" the detectives during the next week or so. A sum of £200 was left at Meiklejohn's house in a cigar-box, and Druscovich got £100 and some jewellery. But Abrahams, the lawyer, was pressing that something should be done, and Williamson was urging that every effort should be made to bring the authors of the de Goncourt fraud to book. Poor Druscovich was on the horns of a dilemma.

Meiklejohn scented an opportunity. The general turnover had given him a shrewd idea of the money made by Kurr and Benson. He tackled the latter about it during a flying visit that Benson paid to London. Here is Benson's account of the interview:

"Meiklejohn had some champagne and asked for his whack. He said it was time to arrive at a settlement. I asked him what he would take, and he said £2,000. I said surely he might be serious. He replied that he was perfectly serious. He wanted £2,000, and £2,000 he was going to have. I said, 'Really I shall decline to say anything more on the subject if you cannot be serious.' . . . He said, 'What are you going to offer me?' I replied, 'I was prepared to offer you between £200 and £300.' He said, 'Certainly not.' He seemed to take it as an insult, and said, 'You cannot deceive me this time. I know exactly how much money you have changed. You have changed £13,000, and that was all profit.' I said, 'That may be, but of that £13,000 a great deal was our private money . . . and we have had great expense in the police line.' He said it was no business of his what other people received. What he wanted was his own whack, and he meant to see that he got it."

At this point Kurr intervened, and the dispute was compromised by the payment of £500 in Scottish notes.

They separated, and a day or two later, to the consternation of the shrewder villains, Meiklejohn committed the imprudence of changing a £100 Scottish note in his own name at Leeds. This at a time when the police were aware that some jugglery in note-changing was taking place north of the Tweed. The

local police promptly made a report on the matter to Scotland Yard. Druscovich succeeded in getting hold of the report and burnt it. But his efforts to burke the matter were not entirely successful, as subsequent events showed.

About six weeks after operations had been abandoned, Benson, Kurr, and Meiklejohn were at the Bridge of Allan, in Scotland, still manipulating their financial affairs with the unconscious aid of the local banks. Their allies at Scotland Yard were vigilant. A piece of blotting-paper arrived with the scribbled words, "Keep the lame man out of the way at once." This was emphasised by other letters, and a telegram signed "Brown"—a *nom-de-guerre* of Palmer's: "If Shanks is near I. of W. let him leave at once and see you." Hard upon this came another telegram: "If Shanks is with you, let him leave you immediately. D. leaves to-night and will be at Bridge of Allan by the first train in the morning. Very important."

Benson immediately left Scotland. Affairs in London were going wrong. Abrahams, the solicitor, was hot on the scent, and besides urging Scotland Yard on, was employing other agents, who, as Druscovich complained with some feeling to his superiors, were making things embarrassing for him. Enquiries had led to Shanklin, and it had been discovered that the leading lights of the conspiracy were in Scotland.

So Druscovich was despatched to Scotland, and was intercepted at Edinburgh by Meiklejohn. He was mightily disturbed at this interview. "Cannot I take Benson, and afterwards let him go?" he kept repeating. "He was more like a madman than anything else," reported Meiklejohn, and it was decided that he had lost his head. Benson roundly declared that he had no intention of trusting himself to Druscovich, and fled by devious ways to Rotterdam, where a couple of lesser lights in the conspiracy had already taken refuge.

Druscovich tried to dally in Scotland, but circumstances were too strong for him. He was recalled to London, where one of the smaller fry involved in the matter—a man named Murray—had been arrested.

Kurr also came to London to take counsel with an unscrupulous solicitor, who had much to do with the underworld—one Edward Froggatt. They discussed the question of engineering Murray's escape by bribing the gaoler at Marlborough Street Police Court. Nothing came of this, in all

probability because they were suddenly shaken by the arrest of Benson by the Dutch police at Rotterdam.

Benson had been caught off his guard. He had changed some of the Clydesdale notes at his hotel, and the police, who had been warned from London, got wind of the fact. They took Benson, who was passing under the name of Morton, and his friends into custody.

This was serious. Kurr, Meiklejohn, and Froggatt went into session about it. Kurr suggested an audacious plan that was immediately acted upon. A telegram was drafted and despatched:

"From Williamson, Superintendent of Police, Scotland Yard, London, to the Chief of Police, Rotterdam. Find Morton and the two men you have in custody are not those we want. Officer will not be sent over. Liberate them. Letter follows."

The Dutch police, however, did not act upon this. They waited for the letter—which did not come. In its place there arrived Druscovich, now a thoroughly wretched man, who dare do no less than identify the prisoners, and bring them back to England after the extradition formalities were completed.

The first chance that Benson and Druscovich had of private conversation was on the boat on the way to England. It contained more than a hint of tragedy.

"I asked him," said Benson, "whether he could give me any information about the case. He said no. He had, he said, been kept twenty-five days in Rotterdam, and he was evidently suspected, as nothing was imparted to him, and all his information came from the newspapers. I asked him how he knew he was suspected. He said they had written for his photograph, and he had replied that it would be found at the Home Office. He said that he hoped that the sides of the ship would open, and that we should all go to the bottom. I echoed his wish."

The three or four weeks during which Druscovich was absent had put a different complexion on the case. The wily and daring Kurr had lingered in London, but Williamson and a few loyal men had been busy, and evidence enough to act upon in his case had been gathered. One Sunday evening detectives under the late Chief Detective Inspector Littlechild loitered about his house in Canonbury. Three figures emerged from the place, and the detectives closed about them. One ruffian tripped Littlechild, who retorted with a blow with a cudgel,

and took up the chase of Kurr. For a hundred yards or so the pursuit lasted, and then the pursued man turned at bay with a levelled revolver.

"For Heaven's sake don't make a fool of yourself," cried Littlechild. "It means murder."

"I won't," said Kurr, and tamely submitted to arrest.

It must not be imagined that rogues so fertile of expedient had finished when they were behind the bars. A scheme was devised by which Kurr was to have made his escape from the cells of the police court. This failed. Then warders were bribed and messages were sent, concealed in the heels of their boots, between Benson and Kurr. Negotiations were opened through Froggatt and others to buy off the prosecution. Everything failed. The gang were brought to trial, and Benson was sentenced to fifteen years' penal servitude, and Kurr to ten. Other members of the gang also received heavy sentences.

This ended the first act of the drama. Some months went by, and Benson and Kurr came to the hope that some remission of their sentences might be hoped for if they betrayed the men who had acted as their tools. They made disclosures to the prison governor, and as a result Meiklejohn, Druscovich, Palmer, Clarke, and Froggatt were brought to trial at the Old Bailey for conspiring to defeat justice. For twenty days they were in the dock listening to the details of the story I have unfolded in the preceding pages. All were found guilty with the exception of Clarke, and each of them, in spite of piteous appeals to the judge to be lenient for the sake of their wives and families, were awarded the maximum penalty of two years' hard labour.

Clarke was perhaps fortunate to escape conviction. Sir Edward Clarke, then beginning to establish a great reputation, defended him. He tells of the cross-examination of Williamson:

"Now Williamson had been associated with Inspector Clarke in the detective work at Scotland Yard for many years; had found him a most valuable assistant; had treated him with entire confidence; and until the occurrence of the strange difficulties and delays in the arrest of Benson and Kurr, had never seen cause to doubt his fidelity. I was informed that he still had some friendly feeling towards his old colleague, and that he would not be sorry if his evidence were to assist me in my defence. But he was a man of the strictest honour, and every question would certainly be truly answered, whatever the effect of the answer might be. My task, therefore, was so

to frame my questions that each should bring a reply in my client's favour, without provoking any qualifying phrase which would indicate the opinion of the witness on the case actually before the jury. On that task I spent many hours. I prepared questions and answers as if I were studying a chess problem, seeing how far it would be possible to follow up and emphasise with safety the favourable answers which I knew some of my questions must receive. My labour was well rewarded, and Superintendent Williamson's evidence did much to help me to success."

Clarke after his acquittal retired on a pension. Meiklejohn served his term and became a private enquiry agent. I believe that Druscovich also took up some business of the sort. Palmer became a publican. Benson, the leading spirit of the whole affair, was released after ten years and, following another series of fraudulent adventures, committed suicide in a New York prison.

CHAPTER XXX

THE CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION DEPARTMENT

WITH confidence rudely shaken in the detective system of London, it was realised that something drastic had to be done. There were other and subsidiary causes than the venality of the senior detectives for public uneasiness. There had been a sudden and extraordinary rise in the crime figures for 1877, not altogether explained by an alteration in statistical methods. Burglaries alone had very nearly trebled. The Commissioner's report said:

"The year was marked by the prevalence, for a time, of robberies of various kinds, partly accounted for by the depression of trade, and partly the result of the depredations committed by a limited number of thieves, who confined their operations mostly to houses left empty and unattended."

A Departmental Committee recommended that the Detective Department should be overhauled and placed under the charge of an Assistant Commissioner—for choice a criminal lawyer—who should, in the absence of the Commissioner, have charge of the entire body of the Metropolitan Police. It was a part of the scheme that the divisional detectives should be under the supervision of the department.

It chanced that a young and ambitious man, not without some influence, saw opportunity in the Scotland Yard upheaval. This was Howard Vincent, who had been by turn soldier, war correspondent, and barrister. It may be said without injustice that he had achieved no particular distinction in any of these spheres. But he was a man of energy and some vision. Looking about for a change of occupation, he saw his chance in the detective trouble.

He therefore went to Paris and made a survey of the French detective system. His observations he embodied in a précis—which he rewrote eighteen times—and presented to the Committee. When it was decided to create a new detective department, he applied for the appointment as its chief. He got it.

A curious course was taken by the Government in making the appointment. Vincent was to be "Director of Criminal Investigations," with the salary of an Assistant Commissioner. While nominally under the Commissioner of Police, he was to be absolute in his department. He was told to report direct to the Home Office, and "not to pay too much attention to what was said of him, either by the Commissioner, or anyone else at Scotland Yard."

This can scarcely have conduced to harmony in the domestic affairs of Scotland Yard, the more especially as Vincent was without any statutory position, and he had no disciplinary powers over his men. Henderson was philosopher enough to let the new man alone. Both he and Vincent were men of tact, otherwise the anomalous situation could scarce have lasted as long as it did. The Director of Criminal Investigations became practically a dictator in his own sphere.

Nevertheless he had his difficulties. "The system," he wrote, "prevailing as regards the Assistant Commissioners was peculiar. Instead of being placed in charge of specific departments, they were on duty in alternative months, and having very different views on things often upset one another's decisions. They were by no means favourable to the new order of things, which took all criminal matters completely out of their hands, and to prevent any relapse I never left my post for a single day for three years."

He was fortunate in having Williamson at his right hand. The cold common sense of that experienced officer tempered the enthusiasm of the reformer, and in all likelihood prevented many awkward incidents into which the unchecked zeal of the other might have led him. A day or two after he had taken control there was a big case of forgery which demanded investigation. "Have every station carefully watched," he ordered Williamson, "and keep a close eye on the outgoing boats."

"What will be the good of that, sir?" drily demanded the veteran detective, and Vincent received the lesson that the first point in British detective work was the gathering of evidence to justify an arrest.

The Criminal Investigation Department—for that now became the official title of the detective branch—was in effect a new force. It was the first real attempt to put detection on a scientific footing. The majority of the senior officers were those who had proved faithless. New men were essential,

and those with the necessary qualifications were not always easy to find. It was necessary to build up a belief in the new system. There was, perhaps not unnaturally, a little disposition in Vincent's subordinates not to believe too wholeheartedly in the ardent but untried young reformer who had been pitchforked into Scotland Yard.

Williamson was superintendent. There were three chief inspectors, three first-class inspectors, and seventeen second-class inspectors. These, with a clerical branch of detective officers, were the headquarters staff. In the various divisions there were fourteen local inspectors, twenty-nine first-class sergeants, thirty second-class sergeants, one hundred and ten third-class sergeants, sixty detective patrols, and twenty special patrols.

Howard Vincent may not have been a great detective, and his regime at Scotland Yard was punctuated by strong criticism, but he had courage, and he did put many affairs in order. He was content to accept advice from those competent to give it, and he had high personal integrity and industry.

A month or two after he took command he brought trouble on himself by increasing the pay of the detective staff. There always has been, and there always will be, a certain amount of jealousy on the part of the uniformed police against those they imagine to be their more highly favoured, and more highly paid, brethren of the detective force. This is latent as a rule, but on occasion it shows itself. It thus happened in 1878. "The advantages," say the biographers of Sir Howard Vincent, "conferred on the plain clothes men under Vincent's recommendations led to something like a mutiny in one division, where the superintendent was an able but rather cross-grained man. Handbills were circulated among the sergeants and constables convening a monster meeting. Vincent, of course, had no authority to interfere, but hit upon some pretext for summoning the leader of the disaffection. He managed to talk him over quietly, and the Chief Commissioner then issued an order denouncing the method of agitation, but promising that a hearing would be given to all reasonable complaints urged in a proper manner."

It was a merit and a fault in Vincent that he would not be bound by conventions or tradition. He was always willing to experiment with new ideas, and he was impatient of red tape. This led him into awkward predicaments at times. He was hauled over the coals for using the advertisement columns of

the Press too extensively in the hue and cry for criminals. Such procedure he was told was utterly undignified. Then he got into trouble with the Home Office because he tried the plan of getting into prompt touch with foreign police chiefs in regard to the arrest of fugitive criminals, instead of employing the stately formality and delay of communication through diplomatic channels.

It was asserted that the Director of Criminal Investigations was inclined to urge his men on to make arrests on inadequate grounds, and that the prevailing system of rewards was perilous. Fear of encouraging the *agent provocateur* was much expressed. One particular case caused much discussion.

The police set a trap for a West End chemist who was suspected of supplying noxious drugs, and he was convicted. The judge at the trial was outspoken: "One important part of the question was as to the means adopted by the police for entrapping the prisoner into committing a crime. He regretted that the course had been taken; but he felt it to be a matter of extreme difficulty as to how far deception in such cases was justifiable. At the same time there was a fluency and readiness of invention, and a facility of employing spies to go and lie—for that was the plain English of it—and it was as right it should be spoken in Courts of Justice as elsewhere—a readiness to devise these inventions which was very painful to witness. . . . He could understand that with such a matter before them persons high in the management of the police might have argued that they wished merely to detect and expose a person who was doing what he could to injure society at large in its deepest interests, just as if he was scattering poison abroad in a place where many might partake of it. He did not say that this view was right, but it was one that might be taken, though he owned he thought that people who had any regard for their own integrity would have said whatever might or might not be justifiable, they would not write that letter. . . ."

The sequel was a prosecution against the police officers concerned. I quote from Sir Howard Vincent's diary:

"A Bill of Indictment was preferred direct to the Grand Jury without a word of notice or any magisterial proceedings, against the Inspector, two sergeants, and a female searcher engaged on the case. I received a telegram about noon on December 16, 1880, that the Grand Jury had found a true bill and that the case would be taken the next day. There was not a moment to lose, so I instructed Messrs. Wontner, the very

able criminal solicitors, to defend and to retain Mr. Charles Russell, Q.C. (afterwards Lord Russell of Killowen, Lord Chief Justice of England), and Mr. H. B. (afterwards Sir Harry) Poland, and Mr. Montagu Williams. There was some doubt as to the line of defence it would be wisest to adopt. I insisted that it would be much better to admit the facts and to plead that the action taken was in the public interest, and in the execution of public duty. Mr. Russell, whose experience was only equalled by his forensic ability, held strongly to a contrary view, and with such vehement temper that he threw down his brief a few minutes before the case was called on, declining to be responsible for such a course.

“The moment was an anxious one, for we were left with Poland as our leading counsel. However profound his knowledge of the Criminal Law, he was an indifferent speaker, difficult to follow, and very hesitating. The relief was therefore great when presently that greatest of criminal lawyers and strong judge, the Hon. Sir James FitzJames Stephen, came into Court, and after a few observations from Mr. Poland, said ‘that the first three counts were bad on the face of them as too general, and that in the fourth there was a substantial defect, which it was not in his power to amend,’ adding that ‘this was a very peculiar case, and he did not wish to cast the smallest approach to a censure on the prosecution for what had been done.’”

In the House of Commons the then Home Secretary, Sir William Harcourt, expressed regret for the action of the police. “The House,” he added, “will be more interested in learning what is to be done in this class of cases for the future. They are among the most painful and difficult cases that can exercise the discretion of those who are responsible for the prevention of crime. There are dangers on both sides. In the first place there is the danger that, while the police may be in possession of information that crimes most mischievous to society are being committed, these crimes may be difficult, if not impossible, of detection by ordinary means. The other day the police had information that another man had been carrying on practices similar to those of Titley, but they had insufficient evidence to prosecute. Subsequently both the woman and the child died, and a prosecution will now follow; but this is a prosecution which will have cost two lives. Then there is another danger that the confidence of the public may be shaken in the good faith of the police, and of all the evils that could occur that would be

the greatest. I have no hesitation in stating my opinion that the cases in which it is necessary or justifiable for the police to resort to artifice of the description practised in this case must be rare indeed. As a rule the police ought not to set traps for people; but if there is to be a departure from this rule under extraordinary circumstances, the matter is one of such difficulty that the discretion ought not to rest with the police authorities. I have accordingly directed that no such methods shall be resorted to for the future without direct communication or authority from the Home Office, the responsibility being one which, in my opinion, the Secretary of State ought not in the interests of the public to shrink from."

It was one of Vincent's defects that he would meddle and direct when he should have left matters entirely to a man deputed to carry out an investigation. This in all probability was one of those cases in which the detective inspector in charge of the case suffered from too much instruction.

One of the entertaining experiments made by Vincent was to appoint detectives direct to the service without previous training. Theoretically they were gentlemen of breeding and education whose intellect should make them vastly superior to the plain police officer in the investigation of the more subtle crimes. Actually they were a ludicrous failure. I believe that Mr. Winston Churchill, when Home Secretary, was persuaded not to repeat the experiment.⁴⁶

"It has been urged more than once," said Sir Howard Vincent, "that better and more reliable detectives might be found among the retired officers of the army and younger sons of gentlemen than in the ranks of the police. Willing, as I hope I shall always be, to give every suggestion a fair trial, six such recruits have been enrolled in the Criminal Investigation Department, with a result, I am sorry to say, eminently unsatisfactory. There is, I fear, little doubt that the gentlemen who have failed in one of the professions which they usually adopt, are less trustworthy, less reliable, and more difficult to control than those who enter a calling such as the police in the ordinary course." Five of these men were dismissed after a time, and the other was compelled to resign. "The only case I could bring home in six years of raising money on police information was traced to one of these 'gentlemen,'" said Vincent.

Sir Charles Warren, after he became Commissioner of Police, wrote:

"No change was made in the method of enrolling members for the detective service, but some few candidates have been admitted direct, and a great number examined and rejected. Of those admitted few, if any, have been found qualified to remain in the detective service. It seems, therefore, that though the Criminal Investigation Branch is open to receive any qualified person direct, as a general rule no persons for some years past have presented themselves sufficiently qualified to remain. And there are indications of the advantages of a previous police training in the uniform branch, in the fact that the most successful private detectives at present in the country are those who have formerly been in and originally trained in the uniform branch. . . ."

He added that there was no hard-and-fast rule on physique for a candidate for the detective force. Any candidate might be selected, and it was not necessary for him to have served in uniform. In practice, however, from that day to this, there has not been a man attached to the Criminal Investigation Department who has not started as a constable in uniform.

Vincent's fertile brain and exhaustless energy were expended on many reforms of value. He remodelled the somewhat chaotic *Police Gazette* so that it became a more efficient mode of communication between Scotland Yard and the local police forces, and he wrote a "Police Code" in simple language that could be easily understood by the average constable. In its revised edition this is still of distinct value, although we do not hear now of cases like that of the exuberant young gentleman, in difficulties with a constable, who, taking refuge up a lamp-post, read aloud to "the man in blue" certain passages from a preface contributed by Sir Henry Hawkins, advising the police how to perform their duties.

He created the Convict Supervision Office, which systematised the collection of records and photographs of habitual criminals, and compiled what came to be known as the "Rogues' Gallery," and he brought into being the "hush-hush" department of Scotland Yard known as the Special Branch—then known as the "Irish Branch."

The branch, as originally established, was designed to deal with the outbreak of Fenianism, which became so serious a menace during the eighties. A shrewd, intelligent officer, the late Chief Inspector Littlechild, was placed at its head, and he acted with a small staff almost entirely composed of Irishmen, although he himself was a Scotsman. It is a curious

fact that the tradition of appointing Irishmen to this section lingered for many decades afterwards.

Williamson, although he neglected no precaution, was not inclined to take so grave a view of the Fenian outbreak as Vincent and the Government. He was a little contemptuous of the conspirators. "An informant," said Littlechild, "once came to him, and in all seriousness gave the startling information that some Fenians were practising cavalry tactics in Jerry Flannigan's back kitchen in Theobald's Road. This was too much for Mr. Williamson's gravity, and it was with some difficulty that he could take a serious view of Fenianism afterwards. Nevertheless it did not deter him from giving careful attention to what was going on from time to time."

In point of fact, Fenianism during the eighties involved strenuous work on the part of the Criminal Investigation Department. There were daring and unscrupulous agents at work. Plots were made to blow up public buildings by dynamite, and many of them were partially carried out. *The Times*, the Local Government Board, the Tower of London, Victoria Station, London Bridge, the House of Commons, the Admiralty, the Underground Railway, and even Scotland Yard itself were among the places where explosions took place.

Of the latter outrage, which took place at the end of May in 1884, ex-Chief Detective Inspector Sweeney says:

"That day, by way perhaps of a foretaste of what was coming, sixteen cakes of dynamite and a fuse had been found at the foot of the Nelson Monument in Trafalgar Square. At twenty minutes past nine in the evening a dynamite charge burst in the very headquarters of authority. By a piece of extraordinary good fortune there was at the actual moment absolutely no one in our offices. A few minutes earlier there were two men in the building, one of the inspectors and myself. He went out just before me; I was busy making out a report, but on finishing it I also went out, thus escaping death by about a quarter of an hour. A part of the building was blown down, and many official documents were destroyed, the bulk of them, curiously enough, containing matters relative to the revolutionary party. The very desk at which I had been working was blown to pieces. The crash was also felt outside the Yard; many people were hurt, and the 'Rising Sun' public-house very much knocked about. We ascertained that the dynamite had been placed in a lavatory in the north-west corner of our building. We never discovered how the bomb

was ignited, though, of course, the debris was searched with the greatest care; no traces were found that could help us to a conclusion. Neither have we ever been certain who the perpetrators were; but we suspected two men named Burton and Cunningham, who were arrested six months later for being concerned in a serious explosion at the Tower of London. Both men were sent to penal servitude for life. This affair caused confusion at Scotland Yard for some months, and we could not console ourselves in the same way as the proprietors of the 'Rising Sun.' Naturally thousands of people flocked to see the effects of the outrage; he charged 3d. per head for admitting spectators, and what with this and the increase of custom that accrued to him at least for the time, he more than recouped himself for the damage done to his premises."

Although it is slightly out of chronological order, reference should here be made to a part played by Scotland Yard in frustrating a plot which, if it had been carried into effect, would have altered the course of British history. It occurred during the celebrations of Queen Victoria's Jubilee in 1887. The scheme was to cause a dynamite explosion in Westminster Abbey during the ceremonial service. The principal conspirator was a man who, by some blunder, had drawn money from the Secret Service. Monro, then head of the Criminal Investigation Department, at once realised the delicacy of the position, and had the "agent" warned that the bargain was off, and that he would not be allowed to come to England. But the minor conspirators were in this country, and practically the only hope of finding them was through this man. The risk, therefore, remained that an attempt would be made to carry out this plot.

"To have carried out the original scheme, and to have seized these men and brought them to justice," says Sir Robert Anderson, recounting the incident, "letting the agent who betrayed them return to New York with his pockets lined with English gold—this would have been ostensibly a brilliant police coup, but it would have been achieved by discreditable means. On the other hand, an outrage in the Abbey at the Jubilee service would have been a disaster of such magnitude that some might think any means legitimate to avert it. . . . But it needed a strong man to accept the risks. . . ."

In one way and another the Fenian campaign was stamped out, but the Special Branch remained. It was charged with the protection of Royal personages and statesmen, and with

the duty of watching political suspects. These remain its business to the present day. Nihilists, anarchists, suffragettes, spies during the Great War, Sinn Feiners, and Communists have all provided it with occupation, and some notable detectives have served in its ranks.

CHAPTER XXXI

BUSY DAYS FOR THE C.I.D.

THERE is a common fallacy that the solution of murder mysteries is a test of the efficiency of a detective department. In actuality murders are the exception in criminal investigation work. London, during the existence of Scotland Yard, has had fewer murders in proportion to its population than any other great city in the world; and the proportion of undiscovered murderers is infinitely less. But, nevertheless, murder is not crime in one sense of the word. A murderer is quite often a person who would scorn to pick a pocket or burgle a safe. Formulae cannot be laid down so easily for the detection of murder as for other crimes.

This by way of introduction to a gibe from *Punch* in 1881: "The Criminal In(ve)stigation Department has issued its annual report, and the Defective Police is declared to be absolutely perfect. No allusion is made to the undiscovered murders in Bloomsbury, Cannon Street, Coram Street, Hoxton Euston Square, Burton Crescent, Harley Street, etc., etc. The Chief of this Department, like the rest of the world, is doubtless bent upon holiday making. Let us suggest Chatham. The murderer of Lieutenant Roper is still at large, and a thousand pounds is offered for his discovery."

It is scarcely to be imagined that a list like this could happen nowadays. No doubt the few highly trained men Sir Howard Vincent had at his disposal were severely taxed. One or two notable murderers were, however, brought to justice. One of these was a woman, who was cleverly run down by two detective officers, Inspectors Jones and Dowdell. The mutilated body of a woman had been found in the Thames without any clue to identity. "We found, however," says Vincent "that a Mrs. Thomas was missing from Richmond, and a boy had been asked by her late servant to carry a box for her over Barnes Bridge. Halfway over she took it from him. He heard a splash and the woman reappeared without th

box. She was traced as having left King's Cross at midnight a week before, and her identity established by a prison form, found in the pocket of a dress she left behind, as Catherine Webster. After a hue and cry for four days she was found in Ireland and brought to London. She made a statement admitting the death of Mrs. Thomas, but incriminating one Church, who had bought the murdered woman's things. He was subsequently arrested, but the case against him failed. In the result Webster was found guilty and executed on July 29, fully confessing her crime."

Charles Peace, who has become almost traditional as a criminal, was arrested by accident by a constable named Robinson, who disturbed him on a marauding expedition at Blackheath, and was severely wounded by revolver bullets in the ensuing struggle. Although the C.I.D. could claim no credit for the arrest, they established his identity, and found that he was wanted for a murder at Banner Cross, near Sheffield.

Another constable who disturbed an armed burglar was less lucky. This officer was named Cole, and one foggy December night he attempted to arrest a man climbing a wall at Dalston. There was a fierce struggle, in the course of which the suspect fired three times. Cole dropped dead. Other police officers summoned by a young woman who witnessed the affray arrived too late. The murderer had escaped.

The case was put in the hands of Detective Inspector Glass. He examined the articles that were found on the scene of the crime. They were a black wide-awake felt hat, a couple of chisels, and a small wooden wedge. The bullets that had been fired at the murdered man were also carefully preserved.

On one of the chisels there were a few scratches which to the naked eye meant nothing, but under a magnifying glass could be read as the word "rock." This was the nearest approach to a definite clue on which Glass had to work. Beyond that was the vague fact that two police sergeants had noticed a man in a black wide-awake hat in the vicinity of the spot a half-hour before the murder took place.

Glass felt that his chief hope lay in establishing the ownership of the chisel. Patiently and systematically all the tool-makers, tool-sellers, and cabinet-makers in the neighbourhood of Dalston were shown the implement and questioned. This slow and tedious task, in conjunction with other lines of investigation, continued for something over a year. Then a

Mrs. Preston, who made a business of sharpening tools, was found. She thought that she remembered it. "If it has been through my hands I must have marked it with the name of the man who owned it."

The word "rock" scratched on the blade of the chisel was shown to her. At once she identified the tool. It had been sent to her to be ground by a young carpenter named Orrock, whom she had not seen lately.

With this solid ground beneath his feet Glass considered the police records and found that a man named Orrock, with a poor reputation, had once been in trouble. It seemed likely enough that he might be the man. But where was he? The search concentrated on finding him. Glass himself asserted that the man who gave Orrock away never knew what he had done. Anyway, it was found that the murderer had adopted an ingenious method of hiding himself. He had allowed himself to be caught and sent to prison for twelve months for burglary. His ingenuity overreached itself, for the police now knew that he was safe to their hand while they continued their researches. One of the sergeants who had seen the man in the black wide-awake near the scene of the murder identified Orrock. Two associates of the suspect admitted that they were with him on the day of the crime, and that when he left them he was fully equipped for a job, even to a revolver, "in case anyone interfered with him." Another man was found who had been with Orrock when he had purchased the revolver. Then the man who had sold the revolver was found and identified Orrock. The chain was strengthened by people who swore that they had seen Orrock wearing a hat similar to the one found at the place of the murder, and he was convicted and hanged. The whole case was a striking instance of the value of pertinacity and patience in a murder investigation.

Leaving aside the matter of murder, the Criminal Investigation Department in its infancy does not appear to have made any exceptional difference to the mass of serious crime in London.⁴⁷ From 1874 to 1878 the proportion of felonies to each thousand of the population was 4.493. From 1879 to 1883 it rose to 4.856. This seeming increase may, of course, have been due to more scrupulous accuracy in the compilation of the figures.

In 1877, the last year of the old Detective Department, there were 20,281 felonies and 10,462 arrests. In 1878, when the

Criminal Investigation Department was created, the felonies numbered 21,792, and there were 10,849 arrests. The value of the property stolen was in the one year £118,680, and in the other £157,283. In the first case £21,196 was recovered, and in the other £19,785. Criticism was not wanting on this and other matters in these and the years to come.

But the bringing of the detective service together cannot on the whole have been other than valuable, even if it did not give palpable indication of its merits at first. A sense of *esprit de corps* was established, and men pulled shoulder to shoulder. In these days began those conferences of detectives which were later elaborated and still take place periodically.

Then it was more of an informal thing on Sunday mornings, and when the work had been got through anecdote and reminiscence were exchanged. Williamson took advantage of these occasions to retain intimate touch with his men. He had a store of humorous anecdotes.

"One day," says Chief Inspector Littlechild, "he was in Brompton Cemetery attending the funeral of one of his old officers. Having seen his subordinate placed in his last resting-place, the day being fine he walked among the graves almost aimlessly, noting the inscriptions on the tombstones and in a reflective mood generally, when he came upon a labourer doing up a grave. The man, though advanced in years, was tall and well-set-up, and Mr. Williamson, fancying that he recognised him as an old pensioner, said to him as their eyes met: 'Hallo! Don't I know you? Weren't you in the police force once?'

"'No,' said the man. 'Thank God, I have never sunk so low as that yet.'"

Mr. James Monro succeeded Sir Howard Vincent as Chief of the Criminal Investigation Department in 1884. The judgment of those who decided that he was the man to take charge of the Criminal Investigation Department was justified by after-events. But the anomaly of a dictatorship in a branch of the Metropolitan Police could not be allowed to continue. A short Act of Parliament was therefore passed by which Monro became an Assistant Commissioner and amenable to the control of the Commissioner.

Now Monro was a trained police official, and his appointment, as Sir Robert Anderson said, "marked an epoch in police administration in London." He knew the kind of work that had to be done, he knew the difficulties that had to be met by

his men, and while, like Sir Howard Vincent, he was not afraid of innovation, perhaps he had greater poise and knowledge. Although a strict disciplinarian he was extremely popular with his subordinates, who recognised how thoroughly capable he was.

It is likely that Monro's views had consideration in the abolition of a vicious Home Office system of rewards in cases of serious crime. There were several of these, ranging from £200 to £2,000, in 1883, but the principle had an inherent defect. Nowadays a chief detective inspector will pick up a 15s. reward now and again. Then detectives expected to increase their income by at least half through rewards and gratuities.⁴⁸

"Early in 1884," said a later Home Secretary, "a remarkable case occurred. A conspiracy was formed to effect an explosion at the German Embassy; to 'plant' papers upon an innocent person, and to accuse him of the crime in order to obtain the reward that was expected. The revelation of this conspiracy led the then Secretary of State (Sir W. Harcourt) to consider the whole question. He consulted the police authorities both in England and in Ireland, and the conclusions he arrived at were—that the practice of offering large and sensational rewards in cases of serious crime is not only ineffectual but mischievous; that rewards produced, generally speaking, no practical result beyond satisfying a public demand for conspicuous action; that they operate prejudicially by relaxing the exertions of the police; and that they tend to produce false rather than reliable testimony. He decided, therefore, in all cases to abandon the practice of offering rewards, as they had been found by experience to be a hindrance rather than an aid in the detection of crime. . . . I do not mean that the rule may not be subject to exceptions, as, for instance, where it is known who the criminal is, and information is wanted only as to his hiding-place, or on account of other circumstances of the crime itself."

Once Monro had got firmly in the saddle the percentages of serious crime began to drop. This may have been coincidence, but at any rate it showed no loss of efficiency on the part of the detective establishment. If Howard Vincent created the Criminal Investigation Department, it was Monro who consolidated it and induced the public to believe in it.

But you cannot satisfy everybody, especially if you are the head of the Criminal Investigation Department. Years before,

when Barrett was convicted for the explosion at the Clerkenwell House of Detention, the *Daily Telegraph* commented:

"Interesting in one respect, the issue of the trial is strangely unsatisfactory. While the police charged six persons with the crime, they have afforded proof sufficient to convict only one. . . . The police have manifestly failed in some way. . . . We do not wish to bear hardly on the police, who have had to perform an intensely perplexing task, and in many respects have performed it well. But it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that they have fallen into their old blunder of sticking too closely to one line of search. . . . The Cannon Street murderer is still at liberty; so is the person who shot the bandsman McDowell; and now we have a nest of murderers defying our search. It is impossible for the public to regard such repeated failures of justice without grave disquiet."

Mr. Montagu Williams, writing about 1890, quotes this passage, and says:

"I cannot help remarking that it is a curious coincidence that the same fault is being found with the police to-day as was found with the police of 1868. Thus it may be inferred by some that since 1868 the force has not deteriorated; but this opinion I for one cannot endorse. In my judgment the force has deteriorated considerably. I am not speaking about its discipline and its capacity for keeping the streets, but about its ability to detect crime. At the time of the Clerkenwell explosion we had a regular detective force—that is, a separate organisation for unravelling the mysteries and the complications of crime—but that force we never hear of now."

Thus has it always been with the police. At every stage of their career there have been perfectly sincere and experienced critics who have held that the police of twenty years before were a very much better force.

The easy-going, experienced Henderson let well alone. But, when a weak Home Secretary threw him to the wolves and he resigned a couple of years later, that forceful soldier Sir Charles Warren became Commissioner. Warren may have been a great soldier, but he knew little about the detection of crime. Monro was harassed and nagged. There were triangular bickerings between the Commissioner, the head of the C.I.D., and the permanent officials at the Home Office. At the best Warren was not an easy man to get on with, and his autocratic, imperious methods did not commend themselves to the quietly competent Monro and his staff. Nor did the

Home Office make things easier. The influence of Whitehall was rather that of a blister than of a plaster, according to Sir Robert Anderson.

Monro resigned at the end of August in 1888, and Dr (later Sir) Robert Anderson took his place. Anderson was a barrister and an official of the Prison Department, who for some years had been concerned in Secret Service work. Anderson himself says:

“The officers of the Criminal Investigation Department were demoralised by the treatment accorded to their late chief; and during the interval since his practical retirement sinister rumours were in circulation as to the appointment of his successor. I had the announcement had been made that, on his official retirement on the 31st of August, I should succeed to the office, things might have settled down. For all the principal officers knew and trusted me. But for some occult reason the matter was kept secret, and I was enjoined not to make my appointment known. I had been in the habit of frequenting Mr. Monro's room as we were working together on political crime matters but when I did so now, and Sir Charles Warren took advantage of my visit to come over to see me, it was at once inferred that he was spying on me because I was Mr. Monro's friend. The indignation felt by the officers was great, and I had some difficulty in preventing Chief Superintendent Williamson from sending in his resignation.”

But within a month or two Warren had gone and Monro was back at Scotland Yard as Commissioner. “At last we had a thoroughly efficient detective force,” wrote Anderson, “and a Chief Commissioner who had himself done much to make what it was, and who had both acquaintance and sympathy with its duties. He told me, indeed more than once, that he sometimes wished himself back in his old chair. And I traded upon this at first by referring specially difficult cases to him. But this he vetoed, telling me plainly that he was not going to do my work for me. But he added in his genial way that the oftenest I came to him as a friend to talk over my cases the better he would be pleased.”

It is pleasing to observe the genuine admiration for Monro's qualities expressed by most of those who came into close association with him. Anderson frankly recognised himself as a pupil. “If we had been left together for half a dozen years his administration would have made a permanent mark upon the criminal statistics of the Metropolis.”

Almost coincident with Sir Robert Anderson's entry into office began the "Jack the Ripper" murders in the East End. Women of the most degraded type were found dead and mutilated in obscure corners, and never a person was brought to justice. Seldom have any crimes so appalled and terrified the public. There was an unreasoning panic, and many quite level-headed and respectable women could not be persuaded to set foot over their own doorsteps after ten o'clock at night. The murders occurred in Whitechapel on the borders of the City—only one of them was actually within the City—and both the London police forces concentrated all their efforts to solve the mystery.

The City actually put a third of its men in plain clothes, and they were instructed to hang about public-houses, sit on doorsteps, and generally pose as gossiping loafers. The Metropolitan Police flung its best men into the case, and both forces came in for a flood of very violent criticism.⁴⁹

"We hold you responsible to find the murderer," said the Home Secretary to Anderson when the latter took up his duties. The new chief of the C.I.D. very properly retorted that he would only take responsibility for using all legitimate means to find him.

"But I went on to say that the measures I found in operation were in my opinion wholly indefensible and scandalous; for these wretched women were plying their trade under definite Police protection. Let the police of that district, I urged, receive orders to arrest every known 'street woman' found on the prowl after midnight, or else let us warn them that the Police will not protect them. Though the former course would have been merciful to the very small class of women affected by it, it was deemed too drastic, and I fell back on the second."

Relations in this matter between the Metropolitan and the City Police were not too harmonious. In one case half of the apron which had been cut from a murdered woman was found a quarter of a mile distant. On a wall above it were the words: "The Jews are the men that won't be blamed for nothing." The City Police wished this to be photographed as a possible clue, but Sir Charles Warren, on arrival on the scene, gave orders for it to be immediately erased, because he feared that it would provoke an anti-Semitic outbreak. The City men had some right to be angry on this matter.

The murderer must have had many narrow escapes, but his

luck held. All the clues that were followed up proved fruitless. There can be small doubt that he was a sexual maniac. Beyond that all those who pretend to know the facts differ. Major Arthur Griffiths suggests that it was either a lunatic Polish Jew who was afterwards put in an asylum; a fugitive criminal Russian doctor; or another doctor on the verge of insanity, who drowned himself after the last murder. Sir Robert Anderson declared with certainty that he was a low-class Polish Jew who was sheltered by his people—a conclusion ridiculed by Sir Henry Smith, who was then Commissioner of the City of London Police. Dr. Forbes Winslow, a well-known alienist, was equally positive that he knew the murderer, but could not get the co-operation of the police to arrest him. Sir Melville Macnaghten, who held the reins of the Criminal Investigation Department some years later, said: "I incline to the belief that the individual who held up London in terror resided with his own people; that he absented himself from home at certain times, and that he committed suicide on or about the 10th of November, 1888, after he had knocked out a Commissioner of Police, and very nearly settled the hash of one of Her Majesty's principal Secretaries of State."



SIR MELVILLE MACNAGHTEN.



SIR ROBERT ANDERSON.

CHAPTER XXXII

C.I.D. METHODS

WHEN Sir Edward Henry became Commissioner in 1903, Sir Melville Macnaghten, who for fourteen years had been Chief Constable of the Criminal Investigation Department, followed him as Assistant Commissioner. For ten years more he managed the department with discretion. A little-advertised, reserved man, he was energetic, competent and tactful. It was his business to see that crime was suppressed or detected, and he did so in a competent, methodical way, without unnecessary fuss. "He held the view," said his successor, Sir Basil Thomson, "that the proper function of the head of the C.I.D. was to help and encourage his men, and not to hamper them with interference. He had an astonishing memory both for faces and for names; he could tell you every detail about a ten-year-old crime, the names of the victim, the perpetrator, and every important witness, and what was more useful, the official career of every one of his 700 men and his qualifications and ability."

No one who knew Macnaghten would underrate his qualities. He kept crime down, and he kept his men disciplined and happy. But he was inclined to be conservative.⁵⁰ He was succeeded in 1913 by Mr. (now Sir) Basil Thomson, who had some acquaintance with criminal matters by virtue of experience as secretary to the Prison Commission, and as Governor of Dartmoor and other gaols. The greater portion of his term of office was devoted to superintending the war activities of the Criminal Investigation Department.

Before 1919 there was a great deal of centralisation in the work of the department. A large number of details were referred to Scotland Yard—a system which had obvious merits, and no less obvious defects. There were two sections performing the main functions of detective police—the Central Branch, which dealt with ordinary crime and criminals; and the Special Branch, which was chiefly concerned with political offences and

their possibilities. Both came under the general control of an Assistant Commissioner, who had assumed the somewhat grandiloquent title, dropped since the days of Sir Howard Vincent, of "Director of Criminal Investigations." In 1919 it was officially announced that "owing to the increase of work in the Criminal Investigation Department, it was found necessary to separate the Special Branch from that department, and to place it under a separate Assistant Commissioner."

Thus two Assistant Commissioners grew where one had flourished before. Sir Basil Thomson went over to the Special Branch to save England from "Red" machinations, and the Hon. Trevor Bigham assumed control of the ordinary C.I.D. This lasted for a year or so. Mr. Trevor Bigham became legal adviser to the Commissioner; Sir Basil Thomson retired, after some lack of harmony had become apparent between himself and Sir William Horwood, the new Commissioner; and Major-General Sir Wyndham Childs, who had been brought over from the War Office in 1921, became Assistant Commissioner in charge of the Criminal Investigation Department in 1922. Then it was found that, after all, there was no need for two detective chiefs. "With a view to improve the organisation of the Commissioner's office, the Special Branch was, with the approval of the Secretary of State, amalgamated with the Criminal Investigation Department as from the 1st April, 1922."

Up to a year or so before the war there were but two superintendents for the whole of the C.I.D. One of them was concerned with the Special Branch. The other dealt with ordinary crime. The latter, in effect, was the chief executive officer and his duties were broad. Only a man of exceptional stamina and capacity could have carried them out with any degree of efficiency. Such a man was Frank Froest, but on his retirement things were a little eased by the long-overdue appointment of superintendents to control certain specialist departments. The war, in all probability, delayed the taking of any further steps, and it was not till 1919 that the Commissioner reported that "the expansion of this department has not hitherto kept pace with the increase of work thrown upon it in recent years, and the added difficulties in detection of certain classes of crime which modern conditions have brought about."

A reforming spirit was abroad, and among other changes of organisation an attempt was made to make the detective service more flexible by a revision of system. One of the chief changes

made was the appointment of four detective superintendents, each of whom was given charge of a quarter of London. 'Thus a more direct personal control was maintained over the detectives of each division.'⁵¹

A little less than a twentieth part of the Metropolitan Police is composed of detectives. While the strength of the uniformed branch has practically stood still for fifteen years or so, that of the plain clothes men has increased by a third—a tendency of some significance. There are actually 900 men under the control of the Criminal Investigation Department, and of these the majority are attached to divisions. At Scotland Yard itself there are between 200 and 250 men, many of whom are attached to the specialist departments, such as the Special Branch, the Finger-Print Department, and the Criminal Record Office.

The whole of the Criminal Investigation Department comes under the supervision of an Assistant Commissioner, a Deputy Assistant Commissioner—a post created in recent years—and a Chief Constable. The latest figures give the rest of the personnel as composed of seven superintendents, seven chief inspectors, 103 inspectors, 403 sergeants, and 322 constables.

It will be observed that the prospects of early promotion on this side of the police service are considerably higher than with the uniformed men. The mere fact that a man has been selected as a detective is, in some sense, a proof of his fitness for promotion. On the other hand, it generally takes longer for a detective to reach the grade of inspector than it does the uniformed man.

The "Big Four" superintendents, as the newspapers love to call them, are the link between the Scotland Yard administration and the divisional detectives. Each is responsible for the detective work of a quarter of London. In every one of the twenty-three divisions of the Metropolitan Police District there is a divisional detective inspector, sometimes assisted by a junior inspector, who is in control of from a dozen to thirty men spread over the various stations. Except in a few of the outlying districts, there are one, two, three, or more detectives to every police station. They deal with local crime, make it their business to know local thieves, and may be reinforced by colleagues sent direct from Scotland Yard as occasion demands.

The central station of a big division will carry several detectives of varying grades. At some of the outlying stations, however, will be found but one detective sergeant, who has to

be industrious as well as resourceful in dealing with the multifarious matters of crime that may arise in his district. It is at any rate good training, for he has largely to rely on himself and to accept responsibility. Although his chiefs are always accessible and ready to give advice and assistance, there are scores of things on which such an officer must play a lone hand. His reports go in daily, as do those of every officer of the department. On the other hand, he must know where to draw the line. In the event of any crime beyond the ordinary, he gets in immediate touch with his divisional head, and within a matter of minutes the information can be passed on to one of the Big Four at Scotland Yard.

Usually it is found that the divisional men can deal with any matter needing attention in their districts, but occasionally London is startled by some great mystery. It is then that the C.I.D. moves swiftly, with every nerve strained to achieve its ends.

There is no actual "murder commission" or "homicide squad" as there is in some foreign countries, but every person and device likely to be of assistance are quickly concentrated on the spot. Not a second of time is lost from the time that a crime is reported, possibly to the policeman on the beat. Most of the divisional detective inspectors are supplied with motor-bicycles and side-cars, the superintendents and other high officials have motor-cars, and there is a variety of motor transport at the disposal of the detective service.

Not a second of time is lost from the moment the crime is discovered. First on the scene will be the divisional detective inspector and his staff. Telephones and the chattering tape machines tell the details in ten score of police stations. The superintendent of the district will motor in haste to the spot, and in all likelihood some of the high administrative officials from the Yard. Specialists are summoned from all quarters. Not a thing is moved until a minute inspection has been made, plans drawn, photographs taken, notes made, and finger-prints sought for. It may be necessary to get certain points settled by experts, by a Home Office pathologist, by a gunsmith, an expert in handwriting, or any one of a dozen others. The very best professional assistance is always sought.

Circumstances dictate who shall be in direct charge of the investigation. It may be the Superintendent himself, it may be a Chief Detective Inspector from Scotland Yard, or it may be the Divisional Inspector. Whatever subordinate detectives

are available are kept busy. They are making a kind of gigantic snowball enquiry, working from such facts as are obvious. A has little to say himself, but there are B and C, who he knows were in some way associated with the murdered person. And B and C having been questioned, speak of D, E, F, and G; and it may be that a score or more of persons have been interviewed ere one is found who can supply some vital fact. Organisation is the handmaid of speed in the investigation. If enquiry leads to Plaistow or to Twickenham, there are men of the C.I.D. ready and competent to carry out any action that may be required of them.

If a description of a wanted man is available it reaches all the police stations of London—indeed, of the country—over the wires. The great railway termini are watched. Should a man slip out of the net drawn about London he will find England watched from port to port. There are men of the Criminal Investigation Department at many of the great ports, and at others the co-operation of the local police is enlisted. He is lucky indeed if he gets away after the hue and cry has been raised.

There is nothing haphazard about the work. Everything is put on record whether it appears relevant or irrelevant to the enquiry. In the Registry—a clerical department now staffed with civil servants and women, but formerly with police officers—every statement, every report, is neatly typed, filed in a book with all relating to the case, and indexed. This dossier remains available just so long as the crime is unsolved. The progress of the case is shown almost to the hour. A fresh officer put in charge of the investigation would have no difficulty in picking up the threads.

In very serious cases, once a suspect is under arrest, the Public Prosecutor may take a hand. He will point out the weak links in a chain of evidence. "We have to prove such and such a thing. Can it be done?" Then enquiries must be carried out on the lines indicated.

Although the detective machine is adapted to the contingency of a murder investigation, its usual line of duty is among the steadier routine of crimes against property. Murders are rare; but the burglar, the pickpocket, and the forger are with the C.I.D. every day.

Here it should be said that most of the elaborate systems of record and indexing at Scotland Yard are weapons to be used mainly against the thief who has been convicted at least once

before. With other people the detective has in the main to rely upon native shrewdness and observation.

The bogus robbery is one of those crimes which is a commonplace of criminal investigation routine. More difficult is the casual theft. A door or a window left open and a house unguarded—it is almost incredible how many thousands of people do so every month—and a gipsy, a tramp, a hawker, may walk in, help himself, and vanish without the faintest clue being left. Simple ordinary precautions would send down the percentages of robbery by a very noticeable amount. The thief who has to use force or ingenuity to effect his purposes usually leaves some sort of clue to work upon. A C.I.D. man may be able to say, quite offhand, "This job was done by So-and-so."

In professional crime things are simplified by the organisation of the various Scotland Yard specialist departments. But, even if this fails, a somewhat similar principle to that of the "Modus Operandi" system may be applied. Should there be nothing very tangible to act upon, the detectives—who know intimately the criminals in their district and many out of it—will try a method of elimination. "This," they will say in effect, "is probably the work of one of half a dozen men. Let us see who could have done it, and then we shall have something to go upon. A and B are in prison; C we know to be in Newcastle, and D was at Southampton. Either E or F is the man."

It is the business of a detective to know thieves. Without an acquaintance with their habits of thought and social customs he may be lost. The "informant" plays a great part in practical detective work, and the informant, it follows, is often a thief himself.

So it is among the friends (and enemies) of E and F that the detectives set to work. It is a task that calls for tact. E, we will suppose, is at home, and all his movements about the time of the crime are checked and counter-checked. F has vanished from his usual haunts. This is a circumstance suspicious in itself, but rendered more so by the fact that his wife is uncommonly flush of money.

Perhaps a detective pays a visit to F's wife. With the remembrance of many kindly acts performed by the police during her husband's involuntary absences, she is torn between a stubborn loyalty to him and a wish to be civil to her visitor. He is sympathetic—cynics may not believe that the sympathy is often genuine—but he has his duty to do. He does not expect

her consciously to betray her husband, but his eyes are busy while he puts artless questions. An incautious word, the evasion of a question, may give him the hint that he seeks; or, on the other hand, she may be too alert, and his mission may be fruitless.

The wide-flung net will sooner or later enmesh F. He may be seen and recognised, or, what is quite as likely, he will be betrayed by some associate or acquaintance.

"Young man," demanded old Jack Shore of a novitiate officer, "who is the best detective in the service?" And he answered the question himself. "The informant is the best detective we have."

There is a distinction between an informant and an informer. An informer is, so to speak, a casual ally of the police. It may be a jealous woman, a revengeful accomplice, or a perfectly respectable person who has stumbled across the track of a crime. The informant, or "nose," or "nark," as the writers do—and the police do not—call him, is a definite if unofficial auxiliary to most detectives. He is almost indispensable, although he may not be a very savoury person. It is difficult to analyse his motives, for there are no detectives who can afford to pay heavily for this type of information. He is not infrequently a thief or an ex-thief himself, and the detective has to be cautious. But there are informants who can be more or less trusted and who seem to delight in exercising a capacity for spying upon their associates. A few shillings, a drink, or an occasional friendly nod, is all that the informant may get from his labours. But small as are the rewards with which he is content, they are sometimes a heavy drain upon the pocket of an individual detective, for Scotland Yard does not care to have relations too official.

In Mr. W. T. Ewens' interesting book, "Thirty Years at Bow Street Police Court," is an entertaining anecdote of one of these informants. "Among the people who attended the Court regularly was a man who had for many years assisted the police. He was by no means an ordinary 'nark.' He was quite at the top of his profession. Scotland Yard officers had employed him on many occasions and through him had succeeded in running to earth men connected with remarkable crimes. I heard him say on one occasion, 'I have sent more men to penal servitude than anyone at Scotland Yard has ever done.' . . .

"One morning he was found crying in a waiting room

adjoining the Court. 'What's the matter?' asked one of the officials. 'Matter,' replied the man who had sent so many mothers' sons to penal servitude. 'Why, my poor son has just got two months' hard for pinching a thing not worth a fiver.' He wiped his tears away with a very dirty handkerchief, and immediately afterwards had another fit of sobbing."

The *corps d'élite* of the detective service is at Scotland Yard. There may be as good, or even better, men in some of the divisions, for there is always an inward and outward flow due to promotion and other circumstances, but it is sure that there is no man at headquarters who cannot pull his weight.

Of the senior officers located there, all have been through the mill, and have a good general acquaintance with every branch of their profession. The majority of them have specialised, however, on some phase of crime or method of investigation. There can be found here a man who may be consulted about the ways and personalities of cosmopolitan criminals, and another who is deeply versed in the possibilities of foot-prints. A third has an intimate knowledge of commercial fraud, a fourth of forgery, and still another of coining. A man who has a *flair* for any particular line finds opportunity and encouragement to develop it.

The nearest approach to a free-lance detective in the Criminal Investigation Department is the chief inspector. There are five men of this rank who are attached to no department or division, and are available for action wherever they are required. Murder cases of any intricacy in the London district are usually allotted to the charge of one or the other of them. When a provincial force gets a little out of its depth it may apply through the Home Office for the loan of a Scotland Yard man. It is invariably a chief detective inspector who is sent.

It has long been the custom for special detective patrols to haunt some districts in which there has been an outbreak of crime without being charged with any specific purpose of detection. The Flying Squad is, however, a different thing. Experiments with a small mobile body of capable detectives who might be flung instantly to any point at which they were needed were carried out in the closing years of the last century under the late Chief Detective Inspector Fox, but, although they were successful, no attempt was apparently made to develop and continue the idea in a systematic way. The scheme was revived in 1920, and the Flying Squad came into being. Twenty to thirty men were put under the charge of

an inspector, supplied with motor tenders, and sent wherever the area superintendents thought that they might do most good.

There is a big advantage in the police of a district knowing the rogues with whom they may be brought in contact. On the other hand, there are times when it is a distinct disadvantage. In some classes of crime it is as well that the detectives on duty should be strangers to the thieves. There is one of the reasons for the Flying Squad. It may be on duty at a race meeting to-day; rounding up pickpockets in the Strand to-morrow; chasing motor bandits in an outlying district the next day; or dealing with confidence tricksters on another day. The essence of the squad is that its members should be as unknown as possible to their quarry.

The squad has its own little fleet of motor-cars, for it is essential that they should be able to move from spot to spot with swift precision. The men who drive these cars are trained to meet any contingency, however dramatic. The tests imposed upon them are drastic. A candidate is taken to a remote country lane with an official sitting at his side. A shot rings out, and he is informed that one arm is "wounded." With one hand, therefore, he has to continue his journey at speed. Again, a bundle of hay is thrown in front of the car unexpectedly. He has to dodge this obstacle without the faintest hesitation. These and a dozen other devices are tried to test his nerve and skill. In quick succession a bewildering number of orders is rapped out, each of which has to be instantly obeyed. There is an ultimate trial in heavy traffic before a driver is considered qualified to drive a Scotland Yard motor-car.

Many of these cars have wireless, by which constant touch may be maintained with headquarters either by telephone or with the Morse code.

The Scotland Yard detective has never been lavishly paid for his work and his responsibilities. Even if he should achieve the post of Chief Constable he will only just touch the thousand a year mark, but the probability of his getting so far is small even if he goes on for thirty years or so. Generally speaking, he has done pretty well if he reaches the grade of chief inspector and gets within sight of £650 a year. Roughly, the pay and allowances—which latter are, of course, not calculated for purposes of pension—are as follows:

Superintendents, £550 to £775; £20 for clothes, £39 detective allowance, £80 rent. Minimum total, £689. Maximum total, £914.

Inspectors, £326 to £537; £22 for clothes, £33 or £26 detective allowance, £5 for boots, £50 rent. Minimum total, £429. Maximum total, £647.

Sergeants, £260 to £320; £18 for clothes, £19 detective allowance, £5 for boots, £44 rent. Minimum total, £346. Maximum total, £406.

Constables, £182 to £258; £18 for clothes, £12 detective allowance, £5 for boots, £37 rent. Minimum total, £254. Maximum total, £325.

A proportion of pay is deducted for superannuation. Expenses are, of course, allowed; but they are checked very punctiliously, and it is more than probable that a detective is out of pocket in the course of a year. In the old days detectives were able to augment their pay not inconsiderably by official and private rewards. Now, however, it is seldom that a private person is allowed to give money to a Scotland Yard man. The official rewards are quite trivial, and are valued simply as a mark of commendation. They range from about 5s. for a constable to 15s. for a chief inspector. The total amount spent in this way for the whole force does not much exceed £1,000 a year.

CHAPTER XXXIII

IDENTIFICATION

IDENTITY is a rock upon which many a pretty piece of detective work has split. The great majority of miscarriages of justice have been brought about by mistakes of identity. All who frequent courts of justice are aware that the most sincere, honest, and observant witnesses may make the most serious blunders. It has happened that a dozen or more positive witnesses have been wrong. The most amazing coincidences have occurred.

There are two broad classes into which questions of identification may be divided. There is direct recognition by witnesses of a person who has been seen in the commission of a crime. There is the official identification of a person as a criminal.

Obviously in the first case nothing can eliminate chance. The circumstances of a moment of excitement, the powers of observation and memory, the effect of suggestion or imagination, may influence a witness. But the second is a colder, more calculated piece of work, in which the aid of science and system are, or should be, invoked.

Now, from the police point of view, certain and unquestionable knowledge that a man is a rogue is of the highest importance. The man who lapses into crime for the first time matters comparatively little. It is the rogue by vocation who has to be most closely watched. He is the biggest menace to the community, and not only for the sake of punishment when he is trapped, but for many reasons it is necessary for the police officer to know him for what he is. "Get to know thieves, my boy; get to know thieves," was the sound advice given to young detectives by one of the ablest of the superintendents of the Criminal Investigation Department.

Every detective worth his salt back to the days of the Bow Street runners has acted on that principle. But the individual knowledge was of little use to the London detective if his man was busy at Liverpool. What was needed in the early days

of the London police was some organised system of letting the identity of the professional thief be common knowledge. Sir James Fraser, when Commissioner of the City Police, did indeed seriously suggest that professional criminals should be branded by tattoo marks.

The first attempts of this kind were very crude, being a mere physical description gathered from any source available which was issued when a man was actually "wanted." There was no attempt to collate and index rogues until the early sixties. Nor do the police authorities appear to have realised the necessity for such a list.

For this it is perhaps not altogether fair to blame Sir Richard Mayne. The first "ticket-of-leave" Act was passed in 1853, when transportation had practically ceased, and it was undoubtedly the intention of Parliament that the police should keep an eye upon discharged convicts. An egregious Home Office, however, directly forbade that they should be interfered with. It was expressly ordered that their comings and goings were not to be too closely pried into, "nor when seen in public-houses are they to be pointed out to the landlord and required to leave as in other cases of convicted thieves and suspected characters." Could fatuity go farther?

Sir Richard Mayne told a Parliamentary Committee three years after the Act had been passed: "It may appear strange for me to say so, but until a few months ago I never saw a ticket-of-leave, and did not know what was endorsed upon it—it was no business of mine."

It can scarcely be held surprising that these discharged convicts destroyed their licences, and when arraigned for fresh offences stoutly declared themselves reputable and innocent men. Proof to the contrary was difficult to obtain. The working of the whole system had become farcical, largely because there was no proper system of registration.

Things were tightened up by the Penal Servitude Act of 1857, but it was not till the Prevention of Crimes Act in 1871 that legislative powers were given for the photography of prisoners, for police supervision, and for personal report of ticket-of-leave men once a month to the police. It was also required that a register should be kept.

So early as 1854 one prison governor—at Bristol Prison—had recognised the uses of photography for identification purposes, and took daguerreotype portraits of the prisoners under his care. Clearly this, however, would be of little more

than local importance. Some kind of a start was made by Scotland Yard by the collection of photographs of known criminals about 1864. This suffered, no doubt, from lack of co-operation and system, but it was the beginning of the famous Rogues' Gallery which for many years held the field as the greatest aid to the identification of the recidivist.

A special department—the Convict Supervision Office—was created in 1880. This was in part the result of the investigations of a Royal Commission which had heard many complaints from ex-convicts of being blackmailed, persecuted, and prevented from earning an honest living.

Somewhere in Scotland Yard there is a vast collection of the big, dirty, brown-covered albums—a library of criminal biography compiled by police and prison officials—which each contain 6,000 photographs. With them are smaller volumes with 500 portraits in each which give particulars of marks or physical peculiarities, as well as the records of ex-criminals. It is, so to speak, a British Museum of crime. These records are still kept up to date, though under a somewhat different method.

It was a cumbrous system, and none too reliable, but it was the best that could be devised. Photographs were printed for circulation among the police forces of the kingdom, but neither photographs nor descriptions could be relied on with any certainty. The difficulty of identification by photograph is not to be under-estimated.

Searches of these albums to trace a particular criminal were no light task. Spite of meticulous care in indexing, a search might take many hours, and then prove fruitless. In 1893 it was stated that on one day twenty-one police officers made twenty-seven searches, but could only identify seven persons. The waste of time was enormous. "A total," said Major Arthur Griffiths, "of fifty-seven and a half hours was expended on the task, giving an average of two hours per person sought and more than eight hours for each identification."

Another method of identification that was practised was that of personal inspection of prisoners on remand by detectives and prison warders. Holloway Prison was at that time used as a remand prison, and there three times a week a detective officer from each of the divisions, an inspector from Scotland Yard, and warders from the principal prisons of the Metropolis gathered while the prisoners paraded before them.⁵²

The police recognised that this ceremony was double-edged. Reporting in 1870 a District Superintendent said: "In the prison

visiting the police are seen and remembered by the thieves, and usually with much better memories than those they look upon can boast of. The thief will not 'work' where the policeman is, whether the latter knows him or not, and this knowledge, even on one side, has a double advantage."

Although methods of identification and registration have changed and improved, some of the essential functions of the Convict Supervision Office—now swallowed up by the Criminal Record Office—remain the same. It has to keep a watchful eye on all licence-holders or persons sentenced to police supervision after they have left prison. It has always worked in close harmony with the various societies which exist to help discharged prisoners, and is not beyond giving them active and material aid itself. It is a recurring and periodical aspersion on the police that they harass and hound the ticket-of-leave man till he finds it impossible to get an honest living. No convincing proof has ever been given, and the fullest precautions are taken to guard against the possibility. One of the earliest instructions on the subject was:

"No enquiry respecting licence-holders and supervisees is to be made by the Divisional Police without directions, more especially if the person is reported to be the inmate of a hospital, infirmary, or workhouse.

"When Divisional Police are directed to make enquiries respecting licence-holders or supervisees, the greatest care must be taken not to injure them directly or indirectly, either with their employers or landlords. Officers should be employed on this business who are not well known in the immediate neighbourhood. They must wear plain clothes, and the nature of their business is never to be told to anyone save the person they wish to see."

There exists a fund from which many ex-convicts are provided with a fresh start in honest careers. There are no inconvenient questions, no bother or fuss. The Yard is not infrequently cheated, but it takes the risk. Many men have been redeemed in this fashion. But there have been others.

One man had his clothes taken out of pawn. He thanked the office, and went off to hypothecate them in another place. There was another coolly impudent scoundrel, with a turn for carpentry, who made all sorts of odds and ends out of soap boxes. He always had some plausible story. He wanted tools or materials, or his rent was in arrears, or there was a doctor's bill to pay. Surprise visits to his rooms in the East

End invariably bore out his story. But at last it was discovered that he was doing the same thing with many charitable societies—the Church Army, the Salvation Army, and others. He made quite a good thing out of it while it lasted.

The rough-and-ready system of identification, though some attempt to tighten it up was made in 1890, was continued in essentials by the police down to 1893. Many years before Alphonse Bertillon, a young Frenchman, had devised a system of anthropometrical measurements which was far in advance of any mode of identification hitherto practised. Some of the extravagant claims made for it may not have been justified, but it had been introduced into the Paris Prefecture of Police in 1882, and had shown itself to be practicable. Bertillon had found that the measurements of certain bony structures in adults were individual and invariable. Among the points selected were the length and width of the head, the length of the left middle finger, the length of the left foot, and the length of the left forearm. Three things were used as a sort of index—the height of the body, the length of the little finger, and the colour of the eyes.

The Bertillon system had merits, but simplicity was not among them. A great deal depended on the meticulous accuracy of the man who took the measurements. As these came down to millimetres the possibilities of error were not small. Even given accuracy in measurement it has been demonstrated by the most remarkable example on record that the Bertillon system is not infallible. The case is reported by Messrs. Wilder and Wentworth in their valuable work, "Personal Identification."

In 1903 there was committed to the United States Penitentiary at Leavenworth, Kansas, a negro prisoner, named Will West. "A few days after his committal he was brought into the office of the record clerk to be measured and photographed. The clerk thought that he remembered the prisoner, and said, 'You have been here before.' 'No, sir,' answered West; but as the clerk was positive, he ran his measuring instruments over him, and from the Bertillon measurements thus obtained, went to the file, and returned with the card, the measurements called for, properly filled out, accompanied with the photograph and bearing the name 'William West.' This card was shown to the prisoner, who grinned in amazement, and said, 'That's my picture, but I don't know where you got it, for I know I have never been here before.' The

record clerk turned the card over, and read the particulars there given, including the statements that this man was already a prisoner in the same institution, having been committed to a life sentence on September 9, 1901, for the crime of murder. That is, the card found was that of a different man, still within the walls of that very prison, yet of the same name, the same facial expression, and *practically the same Bertillon measurements* as the newcomer! It then dawned on all present that there were two Will Wests, and that here was a case of the most remarkable resemblance of two unrelated persons on record, since neither photographs nor the Bertillon measurements were of any avail in establishing the identity of these two men. The clerk writes that with their hats on it is almost impossible to tell these men apart."

The Bertillon system, then, was one of the chief modes of identification considered by a Departmental Committee appointed by Mr. Asquith in 1893. But a more novel and revolutionary proposal was put forward by Mr. (afterwards Sir) Francis Galton, a scientist of distinction. He urged and proved that imprints of the fingers were an infallible proof of identity—that the chance of two finger-prints being identical was less than one in 64,000 millions. There is controversy as to the man who first adopted finger-prints for purposes of identification. There can be none about the fact that it was Galton who first persuaded Scotland Yard to give it a trial. The Committee laid down three principles as desirable in any system of identification:

1. The descriptions, measurements, or marks, which are the basis of the system, must be such as can be taken readily and with sufficient accuracy by prison warders or police officers of ordinary intelligence.
2. The classification of the descriptions must be such that on the arrest of an old offender who gives a false name his record may be found readily and with certainty.
3. When the case has been found among the classified descriptions it is desirable that convincing evidence of identity should be afforded.

The finger-print system was the only one that met these conditions, but the Committee were nervous that the public would not be readily convinced of its infallibility. They somewhat weakly compromised by suggesting a mixture of the old system, the Bertillon system, and the Galton system of finger-prints.

CHAPTER XXXIV

ENTER FINGER-PRINTS

THERE is irony in the supposition held by a great number of people that Bertillon was the inventor of the finger-print system. In fact, he did not at first believe in it. In the year that finger-prints were first adopted, in a hesitating way, in England, he wrote:

“Unfortunately it is quite undeniable, notwithstanding the ingenious researches conducted by M. Francis Galton in England, that these designs do not present in themselves elements of variability sufficiently trenchant to serve as a basis in a collection of many hundreds of thousands of cases.”

When an expert on identification held these views, it is easy to understand the prejudice that remained in the minds of many people, including some administrators of the law, for years afterwards.

Galton persuaded the authorities that finger-prints differed from each other in so great a degree that the chances of two being alike might be dismissed for all practical purposes. That in itself was one step. But something more had to be done before the finger-print system could become a method of police. Some simple and certain method of classification had to be devised, by which identification could be promptly and easily made. In this respect Galton failed. Ingenious as it was, his method was complicated and cumbersome, and little more fitted than the Bertillon system to ensure absolute identification.

In 1890 176 identifications were made at the Convict Supervision Office. This rose to 563 under an improved system in the following year. The year before the mixed system suggested by the 1893 Committee was put into force there were 2,124 identifications, and this was improved by approximately 800 under the mixed system of 1894. Under the present finger-print system there are in the neighbourhood of 15,000 identifications in a year.

So far as the Bertillon system was concerned, Sir Melville Macnaghten, who was Chief Constable of the Criminal Investigation Department during its operation, said: "Great difficulties were experienced in obtaining absolutely accurate measurements in the prisons. Governors and warders did their best, and so did police, but results shown were pitifully small."

There was in India, at this time, an Inspector-General of Police of the Lower Provinces who had taken a deep interest in the subject, into which he had made much research. This was Mr. (later Sir) Edward Henry. With many pains he had devised a system of finger-print classification based on a mathematical formula, which was simplicity itself in method of working. He demonstrated his scheme to a Committee appointed by the Indian Government. This Committee reported with enthusiasm that every difficulty of classification had been met.

During 1899 Henry read a paper on the subject to the British Association which attracted much attention. In 1900 he published his well-known and standard book, "Classification and Uses of Finger Prints," and in the same year another Committee recommended the substitution of finger-prints for the Bertillon system as a method of identification in this country.

This was done, and, happily enough, Sir Edward Henry was brought to Scotland Yard as Assistant Commissioner of the Criminal Investigation Department to inaugurate the system. In 1900 there were 462 identifications by anthropometry. With supreme confidence Henry announced that "the number of identifications by the new system in 1902 would be three times larger than the highest figures hitherto secured by anthropometry." He was justified, for there were 1,722 identifications.

Nor was this all. No longer was it necessary for detectives to give up time to view prisoners in gaol. The hundreds of hours wasted on searching the albums of the Habitual Convicts Registry were saved. A slip of paper, a little printer's ink, and five minutes' work, had abolished all this.

It took time to establish public confidence in the system. Even juries, judges, and magistrates were sceptical. But occupants of the Bench were invited to Scotland Yard to have the new method explained to them. Once they had grasped its principles they were convinced. The greatest precautions were taken that no injudicious move should shake faith in the

system. Even now Scotland Yard will not swear to an identification unless there are at least ten points of resemblance between a suspect's finger-marks and the record.

The criminal classes did not at first realise what had befallen them when Henry's system came into being. "I remember," said Sir Melville Macnaghten, "as the first Derby Day drew nigh after our 'finger-prints' were in full swing, it was feared that we should not be able fully to utilise them on that occasion, inasmuch as offenders were taken in up till six or seven in the evening, and were dealt with summarily by the Petty Sessional Court at nine-thirty the next morning. Scotland Yard, however, was determined not to be beaten in the matter; experts were sent to Epsom, and then and there took the finger-prints of fifty-four men who were arrested for various offences on the race-course on Derby Day. These impressions were taken up to the finger-print department that night. Two officers, who had been kept on reserve duty for that purpose, examined them, with the result that twenty-nine of these men were found to be old offenders. Their records and photographs were taken down to Epsom early the following morning by a chief inspector. When the 'arrests' appeared before the magistrate at half-past nine, they were confronted with a record of their previous convictions, with the result that they received sentences twice as long as would otherwise have been awarded.

"The first prisoner on this occasion gave his name as Green of Gloucester, and assured the interrogating magistrate that he had never been in trouble before, and that a race-course was, up to this time, an unknown world to him. But up jumped the Chief Inspector, in answer to a question as to whether 'anything was known,' and begged their worships to look at the papers and photograph, which proved the innocent to be Benjamin Brown of Birmingham, with some ten convictions to his discredit. . . . '— the finger-prints,' said Benjamin, with an oath; 'I knew they'd do me in!'"

There is a touch of grim humour in another finger-print story. A constable pacing his beat in Clerkenwell noticed a human finger impaled on one of the spikes of a warehouse gate. Closer investigation showed that the place had been broken into, and that the marauder had been disturbed and taken to flight in panic. In scaling the gate he had caught the little finger of his right hand on the spikes, and it had been torn away.

It was sent to the Finger-Print Department and identified as that of a man well known to the police. Word was sent

round to the C.I.D. to keep a bright look-out for him. Time went on. The finger, carefully kept in spirits, remained at Scotland Yard. Then one day a detective arrested a man for picking pockets near the Elephant and Castle. One hand was bandaged, and the prisoner was unwilling to say what was the matter with it. Soon the reason of his reluctance was disclosed.

The Finger-Print Department held the missing finger.

The first time that finger-print evidence was accepted in court was in the case of a burglary at Denmark Hill. Detective Sergeant Collins—who was to become Superintendent Collins, Scotland Yard's chief expert—was detailed to help an alert officer named Haigh—he retired ultimately as chief inspector—who had found finger-marks on some freshly painted woodwork at the scene of the robbery. Finger-print impressions were taken from the suspect, who was detained at Brixton, and on comparison with photographs that had been taken—with a camera borrowed from a local photographer—it was found that the marks on the paintwork were those of his left thumb. On September 14, 1902, he was convicted at the Old Bailey and sent to seven years' penal servitude.

Finger-prints are only of incidental use in the solution of a mystery. Their primary intention is for the detection of criminals rather than the detection of crime. The fact that finger-prints are found at the scene of a crime does not necessarily make it easier of detection—unless the criminal has been convicted before, and his prints are on record. This rarely happens in the case of murder, for the reason that a murderer is unlikely, in the official sense, to be an habitual criminal. Of course, if a person is suspected and arrested it is easy to compare his finger-prints with those found where the crime was committed, unless, as not infrequently happens, the latter are too blurred to be effectively checked.

Nevertheless, it was on a case of murder that Scotland Yard scored its first spectacular triumph with the new system. In the year 1905 an elderly couple named Farrow were found dead—murdered—in a little chandler's shop in the High Street, Deptford. They had lived over the premises, which they managed for the owner, and, according to local gossip, had hoarded much money. As a matter of fact, there had been perhaps £6 or £7 in the house.

A boy employed at the shop arrived one morning to take up his duties, but found the shutters still up. There was no reply to his attempts to arouse the inmates, and peering through the

letter-box he saw that a chair had been overturned. He obtained help, and an entrance was made.

In the kitchen was found the body of Mr. Farrow. His skull had been smashed. Upstairs, lying in bed, was Mrs. Farrow with terrible injuries to her head, but still living, though insensible. She was removed to a hospital, but died after a few days without regaining consciousness.

When the police were called in it became evident that the crime was of some difficulty and importance. Scotland Yard immediately put one of its best men, Chief Detective Inspector Fox, on the case to aid the divisional detectives.

The usual inspection revealed one or two important facts. Two masks made out of old black stockings were found in the kitchen. An empty cash-box was found in an upstairs room, and the whole place was in great confusion. Two milkmen were found who had seen and spoken to two men leaving the shop at a quarter past seven on the morning of the murder. After this there were two people—a girl and a man—who saw Farrow come to the door of his shop and look up and down the street. They noticed that he was terribly injured about the head and face. The assumption is that the old man had regained consciousness after the departure of his assailants, had made his way in a daze to the door, looked unseeingly out, and had collapsed and died on his return to the kitchen.

There was no difficulty in guessing at the motive and method of the crime. The burglars had broke in on the ground floor, and disturbed by their entry, Mr. Farrow, partly dressed, had descended, and at once been attacked and left for dead by the intruders. Then the screams of the woman upstairs attracted their attention, and she was battered with jemmies to ensure silence.

It was the cash-box that interested most the men from Scotland Yard. For upon it there was the impression of a finger-print. Sir Melville Macnaghten, who was early upon the scene, writes: "Now a japanned surface is a very good medium for the retention of a finger-print, and specially so, of course, if the papillary ridges are damp from perspiration caused by excitement or any other cause. I am given to understand that nervous tension during operations generally causes burglars to have clammy hands. In our case the cash-box showed nothing like an impression, but on one side of the tray there was a blurred mark which had all the characteristics of a digital imprint.

“ On enquiry being made as to whether anyone had touched the tray, a young detective sergeant came forward in some trepidation and confessed that he had moved it a little way under the bed, as he feared it might be disturbed by the feet of one of the ambulance bearers when they entered the room. He was assured that no harm had been done, but was told to go up to the Yard in the course of the day and have his finger-prints taken. The cash-box and the tray were then most carefully wrapped in paper and carted away to the finger-print department at Scotland Yard.”

Neither the finger-prints of the sergeant nor those of either of the dead couple were found to correspond with that on the box. “ Local enquiries ”—again I quote Sir Melville Macnaghten—“ were being pushed in every possible direction, and after three or four days, information reached us that two young brothers of a very pronounced ‘ hooligan ’ type were suspected house-breakers, and might very easily have been engaged in such a crime as had been committed. Their name was Stratton. They were dwellers in Deptford, but birds of passage, and the same address seldom found them for two weeks together. The French adage, *Cherchez la femme*, is a very good one, and it was through a woman who had been ill-treated by the elder brother that we first got on the right scent.

“ The murder had taken place, I think, on a Monday morning, and by the Friday evening little bits of information had reached us, which (although not crushingly conclusive from a legal point of view), when pieced together, made us feel quite satisfied that when we could lay our hands on the Stratton brothers we should have the guilty parties in custody. The address of the elder brother had been ascertained, but the younger had not been seen about his old haunts for many days. It was deemed advisable to arrest them, if possible, together. As they were constant in their attendance at football matches, and an important cup-tie was billed for Saturday afternoon at the Crystal Palace, it was hoped that a joint capture might be then effected. Football, however, had no fascination for them at this time. They never turned up at the match, and, to add to our disquietude, the elder brother slipped away from his lodging and temporarily disappeared. Anything in the shape of ‘ shadowing ’ or strict observation had been purposely forbidden lest the birds should be startled before the fowler’s net was ready for them.

“ On the Sunday morning the police were in somewhat

of a quandary. Orders were issued that either of the brothers was to be arrested wherever found, and to be charged with 'wilful murder.' That Sabbath was a busy day; but late in the evening one of the brothers was arrested in a public-house, and the other was 'taken in' the next morning. This enabled them to be brought up together at the Tower Bridge Police Court at noon, and very noisy and disorderly they were in the dock. The counsel for the Director of Public Prosecutions did not think much of the evidence available, but promised to get the prisoners remanded for a week. This was done in due course, and the brothers were then 'finger-printed' at the police court before being taken away to the remand prison.

"I had returned to my office in the forenoon, and shall never forget the dramatic entry made into my room by the expert an hour or two later. 'Good God, sir,' he exclaimed, with pardonable excitement, 'I have found that the mark on the cash-box tray is in exact correspondence with the print on the right thumb of the elder prisoner!'"

There were, as it happened, eleven points of resemblance. But the circumstantial evidence gathered by Chief Inspector Fox and his associates before the trial took place was also very strong, and it is likely enough that the finger-print was simply taken by the jury as confirmative evidence. Inspector Collins gave a little lecture on finger-prints in the witness-box with the aid of a big chart and some impressions taken from the fingers of a juryman.

The defence was not fortunate in its specialist, a gentleman who had served as expert in identification to the Home Office from 1894 up till the time that the absolute finger-print system was adopted. He denied that Collins had proved the similarity of the cash-box print with that of Alfred Stratton's thumb, but, as it developed that he had written both to the defence and the prosecution offering to give evidence, the value of his opinion was strongly commented on by the judge.

In his speech for the defence, Mr. Rooth (later a London magistrate) was contemptuous. I quote from a contemporary newspaper report: "Dealing with the finger-prints, Mr. Rooth said he did not propose to say much about it; it savoured more of the French courts. It might be a science, but he questioned whether it was suitable to the English mind in Courts of Justice."

Mr. Justice Channell was very cautious on the point in his summing-up. "Turning to the photos of the finger-marks on the box and the photos of Alfred's fingers, the judge remarked

that if it was true there were such differences as had been stated between people's finger-marks, then there was an extraordinary resemblance between the two photos. Yet he was of opinion that the jury would not like to act on this evidence alone."

Both brothers were convicted and hanged.

CHAPTER XXXV

“ THOU ART THE MAN ”

WITHOUT going into technicalities beyond the scope of this work, it is impossible to describe adequately the methods of finger-print identification. They are continually being improved upon, and it is now possible to cable sufficient details of finger-prints to enable a man to be identified thousands of miles away.

Since the finger-print system was introduced, 217,948 identifications have been made, and there are something over 400,000 forms in the collection. During the last year for which figures are available, 36,086 sets were received from all parts of the country for search, and as a result 15,750 persons were identified as having been previously convicted. Some hundreds of articles bearing finger-marks are sent to the branch every year as having a possible bearing on some crime. In the majority of cases the prints are too blurred to be of much use, but some remarkable mysteries have been solved in this way.

Save for a few filing cabinets stretching from floor to ceiling in a well-lighted room, there is little apparent difference between the Finger-Print Branch at Scotland Yard and the interior of an ordinary City office. Men pore over foolscap sheets of paper with magnifying glasses, comparing, classifying, and checking, day in, day out.

They are all detectives, but their work is specialist work, totally different from that of the bulk of the men of the C.I.D. It may be that sometimes they realise that a man's life or liberty depends on their scrutiny, but for the most part they do their work with cold deliberation and machine-like precision. Is one set of finger-marks identical with another? That is all they have to answer. It is the pride of the branch that since it has been established it has never made a mistake.

In these days everyone knows that a finger-print may be developed. I have seen a man press his fingers on a clean sheet of paper, apparently without leaving the faintest trace. A pinch of black powder—graphite is commonly used—scattered

over the paper, and behold the prints standing out in high relief. A grey powder will act in the same way on a dark surface, and a candle which has been pressed by the fingers may have the print rendered clear by a judicious use of ordinary printer's ink.

A corps of expert photographers equipped with the latest appliances is attached to the department, and their services are in constant requisition by the C.I.D. for many purposes other than those of finger-prints. One room is entirely devoted to a powerful lantern apparatus by which every photograph may be thrown up to a hundred times its normal size for the purpose of minute study.

Every prisoner who goes to gaol for a month or longer nowadays has his finger-prints taken a little before he is discharged. The police have only a limited right to take finger-prints or photographs of untried prisoners. In such a case force can only be used under the instruction of an Assistant Commissioner. The finger-prints of a person who is acquitted are destroyed.

I have said that the Finger-Print Branch is only incidentally concerned with the detection of crime. But there is a department at Scotland Yard which deals directly with the question of identification of offenders still at large. This is the Criminal Clearing House. There has long been a crime index of a sort at the Yard, but the Criminal Clearing House, which was created during the war, has charge of something very much more elaborate and scientific than was dreamed of till late years.

Yet in essentials the system is as old as detective work itself. The Bow Street runners acted on its main principle. When Sir Robert Anderson took up his post at the Criminal Investigation Department he says:

"I was not a little surprised to find occasion to suspect that one of my principal subordinates was trying to impose on me as though I were an ignoramus. For when any important crime of a certain kind occurred, and I set myself to investigate it *à la* Sherlock Holmes, he used to listen to me in the way that so many people listen to sermons in church; and when I was done, he would stolidly announce that the crime was the work of A, B, C, or D, naming some of his stock heroes. . . . Though a keen and shrewd police officer, the man was unimaginative, and I thus accounted for the fact that his list was always brief, and the same names came up repeatedly. . . .

"It was easy to test my prosaic subordinate's statements by

methods with which I was familiar in secret service work; and I soon found that he was generally right. Great crimes are the work of great criminals, and great criminals are very few. And by 'great crimes' I mean, not crimes that loom large in the public view because of their moral heinousness, but crimes that are the work of skilled and resourceful criminals. The problem in such cases is not to find the offender in a population of many millions, but to pick him out among a few definitely known 'specialists' in the particular crime under investigation."

There are several fundamental points of police science in which Scotland Yard has led and outstripped the world. There are others in which it has lagged lamentably behind. As early as 1896 it had recognised the importance of a classification of criminals by their methods and peculiarities. Some sort of an index under these heads was compiled, but its usefulness was impaired by clumsy and obsolete office working. Not till 1913 did it become converted to the card-index system. As an instance of office methods it may be permissible to say that the typewriter was only beginning to come into general use in the clerical departments at that time.

Perhaps there was a little touch of self-sufficiency about Scotland Yard that made it a little dubious about new-fangled ideas. Major Atcherley, then Chief Constable of the West Riding of Yorkshire, and now Sir Llewelyn Atcherley, one of H.M. Inspectors of Constabulary, devised a well-considered scheme by which a code of the idiosyncrasies of professional criminals should be tabulated and clearing houses established to digest all information on methods that came to them, and forward the resulting conclusions to the police of the areas likely to be affected.

Major Atcherley's plan, which he dubbed "M.O." (short for *modus operandi*), was at bottom a scientific variation of that of Sir Robert Anderson's "unimaginative subordinate." Most criminals fall into a rut. There is one who will only rob churches; there is another who will only smash jewellers' windows. Apart from these there are the thieves who reveal themselves by the clumsiness or, quite as likely, by the cleverness of their methods. One man may force a window, another may corrupt a servant to open a door for him. In the extreme case it is improbable that a man who has found the easiest and most effective way to break open a safe will revert to a clumsier method to escape identity.

Mr. Raymond Fosdick has given an illustration of what

happens. "A burglary is committed in Wakefield by an unknown person who pasted a piece of sticky fly-paper over a window glass, so that it would not fall when broken, then smashed the glass and slipped the latch. The formula for this crime and the necessary particulars are sent to the clearing house for the district. Here, by comparison, it is shown that similar burglaries have been committed under exactly the same circumstances in other towns in the vicinity. Perhaps in one town the burglar was seen and a description obtained. Perhaps the police of another place know his identity. Gradually, by comparison and elimination, crime is linked with crime, offender with suspect, until finally the case is brought to a point where an arrest can be effected and the finger-print register employed to show connection with previous sentences."

The clearing-house system was established with success in the North of England, and it became apparent that the premier police force of England would, willy-nilly, have to adopt something of the sort. But Scotland Yard refused at first; a clearing house was therefore established at Hatfield, the headquarters of the Herts Constabulary. But at last, during the war, the clearing house of Scotland Yard was established, and used in conjunction with the crime index. Like the Finger-Print Branch and other departments of Scotland Yard, it is constantly consulted by the other police forces of the country. With the progress of time its effectiveness and utility have much increased.

Whenever a crime suitable for enquiry by this method occurs, a form giving details of the time and nature of the offence and the value of any property stolen is filled out. As far as possible the facts on page 293 are supplied.

Many enquiries of this kind reach Scotland Yard every day. They are referred to the small staff of the clearing house. Ex-Chief Detective Inspector Haigh has given a picture of what happens:

"Patience is a virtue, and if ever that virtue existed in men, surely it is in the persons of the good fellows who spend the days of their years in this work.

"No publicity is theirs, no one ever extols or commends their success because they never appear in the courts, and they are absolutely unknown to the public which they serve. They pursue their way methodically and industriously. Here is a sample of a day's work:

1. Offence first known to
2. Offence.
3. Place.
4. Injured person, age and address
5. Details of offence, giving when necessary
 1. Class of person or property attacked.
 2. Actual point of entry.
 3. Means employed.
 4. Object of offence.
 5. Time, showing occasion.
 6. "Style"—viz., criminal's alleged trade or profession.
 7. "Tale"—viz., criminal's previous account of himself in locality.
 8. "Pal"—viz., whether more than one engaged.
 9. "Transport"—viz., vehicles used.
 10. "Trade mark"—viz., anything peculiar done at scene of crime.
6. Description of property missing:
 1. Identifiable—viz., articles which can be so clearly described that the reader can identify them without further assistance.
 2. Non-identifiable.
7. Description of person wanted.

"It is 9 a.m., and, promptly to time, these two or three enter the building, sign the duty book, pass on to their rooms, and get into their old office jackets. In a few minutes there enters a messenger, whose duty it is to deliver to the various offices the correspondence that has arrived by despatch or mail. Into a flat basket he places a heap of letters, each of which has already been scanned.

"Now commences the work in real earnest. Perhaps the first letter is from some country police force, who notify the fact that they have been troubled by a series of burglaries, that in most of the cases the burglar has used a garden spade to force an entry, and has in each case taken certain specified articles. A few minutes suffice to catalogue in the mind of the searcher the salient features of the case, and as he steps over to the filing cabinet he has already decided how to proceed. Pulling out a well-filled drawer, his trained finger runs quickly across the preliminary index, and soon the secondary index shows half a dozen known burglars who make use of garden spades.

"The cards give reference to certain criminal records, and these in turn give all the latest information available. They show that of the half-dozen three are in prison, a fourth is

known to be abroad, No. 5 is missing, while No. 6 is reported to be going straight. Therefore the record of No. 5 is sent with a covering letter to the troubled police force, who, upon receipt, are soon able to get down to the bedrock of their worry by finding that No. 5 is living in their district. Soon he is laid by the heels. In the local newspaper 'A Small Capture' by the police is notified. But the Criminal Clearing House is never mentioned.

"By the end of the day the pile of letters has been dealt with. Each day's work is cleared up before the staff leave for home, and as each letter means a docket and an addition to the index, and a record of the files lent or sent out has to be maintained, the staff finds ample work to keep it busy. At the end of the month the value of the work done is tested by comparative returns. Seldom do the figures grow less."

Identification is the root of detective work; without identification all the rest goes for naught. Even when police methods were perforce more rough and ready there was always a recognition of its supreme importance in matters under investigation. It is, however, only since the eighties that scientific aids and formulas have been sought to aid the always fallible human memory and observation.

But the human factor can never be completely eliminated. Descriptions, photographs, Bertillon measurements, fingerprints, crime indexes, *modus operandi* systems, the whole complex scientific paraphernalia, have not disposed of the matter of identification by sight.

There are times, which arise very frequently, when it is necessary that some person accused or suspected of an offence should be paraded among others for identification by witnesses. Unquestionably peculiar temptations must, on occasion, present themselves to a police officer whose last link in clearing up a case may depend upon a question of identification. Unquestionably, also, there is a peculiar and formidable peril in stepping outside the rigid and scrupulously fair regulations built up by generations of police experience. Again and again these parades have been attacked by counsel, press and public, usually on inadequate knowledge and biased information.

Once in a great while the police make a mistake, but it is in the highest degree improbable that deliberate unfairness is practised. The risks—to put it no higher—are too great.

In 1925 a learned K.C., after a formal enquiry, issued a

report on the detention of a gentleman at Vine Street on an accusation of theft in which severe strictures were passed upon the police. The identification parade was described as “little more than a farce.” Yet this person was very definitely charged with theft by a woman, and resembled a man much wanted by the police. Could they do less than assume that there was a *prima facie* case against him? They would not have been doing their duty unless they had taken immediate steps, so far as lay in their power, to establish identification—which, in fact, they did. The usual procedure was adopted. Eight well-dressed men were invited in from the street, the suspect stood where he would among them and was, with some hesitation, “identified” by another witness than the woman. In the course of time, however, further enquiries showed that a mistake had been made, and the police very frankly said so. Yet the police were blamed, and some of them were punished after an enquiry. That the person involved was innocent could not affect the question of police procedure, which was very closely in accordance with the regulations.⁵³

CHAPTER XXXVI

COMMUNICATIONS

ALL the activities of Scotland Yard are in a sense inter-related. There are the seeming complexities of a big business, but in reality the organisation is close-woven. From the question of a finger-print to that of a cabman's licence or a lost umbrella the Yard is systematised to act through a single department or as a whole.

Before 1914 the Criminal Record Office had no corporate existence. There were the Convict Supervision Office, the Habitual Criminals Registry, the Finger-Print Branch, and other subsidiary sections. All of these worked together, but it was felt that the relations should be much closer than was always possible through detached departments. So they were merged into one, as the Criminal Record Office.

Now the Criminal Record Office has peculiar and important duties which distinguish it from almost every other section of the Metropolitan Police. It is largely made use of by all the other forces of the country, and is, in fact, the great clearing house for the reception and distribution of information on all sorts of criminal matters between Scotland Yard and the local and foreign police. Some of its functions have been treated of in foregoing chapters.

Here I propose to refer to it chiefly in connection with the communications of police. Swift and accurate information is as essential to a police force as it is to an army on active service. One of the chief assets of the department in this respect is a number of publications which are carefully edited and sent out periodically.

It is not generally realised that the Metropolitan Police runs quite a respectable printing office of its own, which is maintained at an expense of about £10,000 annually. The value of this from the point of view of secrecy and despatch will be obvious.

The *Police Gazette* is the oldest and best known of the

publications issued by Scotland Yard. It was originally devised by Patrick Colquhoun under the title of the *Hue and Cry*, and sent to the magistrates of the country as a convenient mode of acquainting them with details of offenders wanted in various jurisdictions. In 1828 it became the *Police Gazette*, and was placed under the editorship of the Chief Clerk at Bow Street. This gentleman received a small salary for his duties, and even after the Metropolitan Police was established, it was many years before it was realised that the production of this sheet was essentially a thing that should be under their supervision.

But the *Gazette* was rather a hotch-potch. When Sir Howard Vincent considered it, after he had formed the Criminal Investigation Department, he found that it contained four pages which gave descriptions of fugitives from justice, and two of lists of deserters from the Navy and Army. "The names were arranged in no intelligible order, and the paper was practically valueless as a means of communication between Scotland Yard and the local police officer." It was published once a week.

Vincent remodelled the paper and increased the number of pages. The various items were classified, and bold wood-cuts purported to give likenesses of some of the fugitives. Long after process engraving had become a commonplace of printing Scotland Yard stuck to the old-fashioned wood-cut.

From time to time there came into existence various collateral publications. There was, for instance, the *Weekly List of Habitual Criminals*, which was first published in 1896. The release of any habitual criminal was notified weekly to Scotland Yard by the various prison authorities and incorporated in this list. A detailed description of each man was given, his intended address and occupation, together with his index number in the records. There was also the *Illustrated Circular*, which gave photographs and descriptions of travelling criminals who sought to evade justice by constantly moving from one police jurisdiction to another.

By stages the various police publications were kept up to date, even to the point of giving process portraits. Instead of being compiled in, and issued from, different departments of Scotland Yard, the whole of the papers relating to criminal matters were dealt with by the Criminal Record Office in 1914. The *Police Gazette* swallowed certain of the auxiliary papers, and for the first time was issued twice a week instead

of weekly. Now it is produced three times a week, and an index is printed every month. In all probability it will shortly be produced daily.

The *Police Gazette* has a number of supplements dealing with specialist subjects. "Supplement A," for example, is issued fortnightly, and is in some points an improvement on the old *Illustrated Circular*, which it displaced. It is in a sense a *news-paper*. The people it deals with are not necessarily "wanted," but they are rogues with whose methods and whereabouts it is well that the police should be kept acquainted. In addition to well-reproduced photographs, a reproduction of a first finger finger-print is given. "Supplement B" deals with ex-convicts "wanted for failing to report." "Supplement C" has reference to aliens who have dropped out of sight. They are not always sought for purposes of arrest, but merely because some police authority "seeks information as to whereabouts." A "Daily List of Stolen Motor-Cars" gives particulars of cars reported as stolen to the Scotland Yard Clearing House. One of the weekly lists is concerned with deserters and absentees from the Navy, Army, and Air Force.

Of a somewhat similar nature to the *Police Gazette*, but restricted to the Metropolitan Police, is *Printed Informations*. This is published twice a day—it used to be six before 1870, and was then reduced to four—and sent post-haste to divisional headquarters by little green-painted motor-cars. Thence motor-cyclist messengers carry them on to each police station in the divisions, and within an hour every police officer has an opportunity of obtaining details of any crime that concerns the Metropolitan district. The size of *Printed Informations* varies from one page to any number that may be necessary, and an idea of its scope may be obtained from the headings: "Wanted for Crime," "In Custody for Crime," "Property Lost or Stolen," "Persons or Bodies Found," "Persons Missing," "Animals Lost or Stolen," "Motor-Cars Stolen."

There are, of course, a number of other publications, not all of which come within the scope of the Criminal Record Office. There is a list of stolen property which goes to pawn-brokers and others. There are lists of stolen cycles and motor-cars which are sent to places where these things are likely to be offered for sale. And, of course, there are "Orders," and police and official placards of one description and another.

It is interesting to hark back and see the system that used



SIR NEVIL MACREADY.



SIR WILLIAM HORWOOD PRESENTING WAR MEDALS.

to obtain in Mayne's day in the police. My authority is the late Chief Inspector Cavanagh:

"In 1855 no printing was done in the Metropolitan Police. Neither was there any telegraphic communication existing between the different stations. It was not until 1858 that printing was practised in the service, and this was mainly due to the ability and energy of Superintendent Kittle, of the Executive Department, Great Scotland Yard. Consequently business was transacted in this wise. The sergeant-clerk or assistant-clerk of each division attended every afternoon (Sundays excepted) at Scotland Yard for 'orders.' These consisted of burglaries, robberies of all kinds, etc., reported each morning by the various superintendents to the Commissioners at headquarters. The sergeant-clerk was supplied with an order book, and, as the inspector of the Executive Department, read out all appertaining to above, the sergeants entered the particulars to take to their superintendents, who were in readiness to receive them. These were, after being read out on parade, handed over to the gaoler, and by him given to the men on reserve to copy." These copies were sent to the nearest stations to be again copied, and in turn sent on to other neighbouring police stations.

It was in 1857 (not 1858) that printing was first used by the police. But it took much longer to overcome an inertia—which is evident again and again in one matter or another—against the device of telegraphy. Communication was established by this means between the main stations and Scotland Yard in October, 1867. Four years later some of the subdivisions were connected by wire. There does not seem to have been any serious attempt to develop it to its full usefulness in the prevention and detection of crime at any stage, although some of the higher officers saw and emphasised its importance.

"Until within the last few years," reported a superintendent in 1875, "the means of circulating information was by the police on foot, or, in emergencies, by the mounted men, whose field of duty is necessarily along the high roads and the lanes for the protection of travellers as in former days. But a great step has been gained latterly, by uniting by telegraph the principal station of the division with the inspectors' stations, and it would be of still greater advantage for the public service, in my opinion, were every station along the main roads from town thus connected for immediate aid or action. . . . I would also respectfully urge that it is as important to house-

holders in the outskirts for the police to have means at their command for the speedy circulation of information in respect of crime, fire, or the like, as to those in the more favoured inner districts, where telegraphic connection is close. It may also be urged that the claim is greater to have the means of swift intelligence where the police are fewer in number, have longer beats, and the stations farther apart, seeing that it would not add a single policeman of any grade to the strength, but would rather help to keep those on duty on the alert for the summoning bell to receive a message.

"The telegraph instrument cannot be too fully appreciated for purposes of police, and its value is really not known until it is at hand. That it inspires a wholesome dread in the minds of the depredatory class is certain, and it may be appropriately termed in this 'line' the modern 'hue and cry.'"

Extensions were carried out belatedly, and in the eighties a "plug" system was adopted which materially facilitated communication between stations. Before this a knowledge of telegraphy had been made a necessary qualification for promotion, and between 10,000 and 20,000 messages were received and despatched annually by each of the chief stations.

The tape machine came in the course of time, and then the telephone—both long after other public and private organisations had discovered their utility. In the year 1910 the Commissioner reported: "Telegraph instruments have now been supplemented or displaced by telephones at most police-stations, and nearly all police-stations are on the public telephone exchange." But it took long to move in this matter, and as late as 1917 there still remained two stations which were not on the public telephone. That was just on thirty years after the first telephone was introduced into Scotland Yard.

"Soon after I went to Scotland Yard (in 1888)," wrote Sir Robert Anderson, "the telephone was brought into use between our offices and Whitehall; and when we moved to the Embankment (in 1890) it was introduced within the new building. But the houses of the Commissioners were dependent on the telegraph, and we had not yet attained to self-recording instruments. Every message, therefore, had to be spelled out letter by letter. The telegraph, though of course a necessity, was thus a thorough nuisance."

Telephones, in fact, were held not to be sufficiently secret. Yet telegraph messages were read aloud by one man and written down by another.

Since the war the police have been active in perfecting their communications. Extensive experiments have been made in the use of wireless, and at least two of the "Flying Squad" motor tenders have been equipped with sets capable of receiving and transmitting over a distance of twenty-five miles.

A large number of motor vehicles are in daily use by the different branches of the service. There is a central depot at Lambeth with an auxiliary establishment at Barnes. A staff for repairs is maintained, and motor-cars and tenders are always ready for any purpose for which they may be needed. There are cars in reserve for the transport of a large number of police in an emergency.

The inward flow of communication with Scotland Yard is no less important than the outward flow. The chief of these are the daily reports from the divisions. The first, "The Morning Report," is compiled by the superintendents of divisions and passed and commented upon by the Chief Constables in charge of districts. This is London's bill of criminal health. Every police station has an "occurrence book" where is recorded everything happening out of the ordinary in the district that comes within the knowledge of the police. From these books the superintendents compile their reports, and thus headquarters is made aware of all things worthy of its cognisance that have happened over 700 square miles during the preceding twenty-four hours. A murder, a riot, a robbery, a fire, a street collision, all find their place in this record.

Then there is the "Morning Report of Crime." Every crime for which a person may be indicted is included here, and an elaborate report given of the steps that have been taken to deal with it. This is largely the work of the divisional detective inspectors, which passes through the detective superintendents to the Assistant Commissioner of the C.I.D.

The third report is the "Morning State," which deals with matters of internal administration of the force itself—numbers available, disciplinary matters, affairs of health.

CHAPTER XXXVII

MAKING A DETECTIVE

It is a curious fact that although a sort of preparatory class for recruits was established in the Metropolitan Police as long ago as 1839, it was not thought essential to give detectives any special training till Sir Edward Henry came to Scotland Yard. Men were, it is true, selected for detective work because, in the judgment of their superiors, they had given proof of some special aptitude; but they had to learn their trade by the light of nature and experience. A point of view was expressed by a divisional superintendent in 1875 in regard to the officers of his division:

“It may perhaps be said that these detectives have not been properly instructed, or that the right men have not been selected. To that I would reply that a man cannot be taught, at least not in any material sense, to be a thief-taker. It must come by instinct.”

This feeling was reflected by even higher authorities. Sir William Harcourt, while Home Secretary, declared:

“It is difficult to lay down hard-and-fast rules for the best training for a detective force, the duties they are called upon to perform being exceedingly different in their character and scope; but I think the best general groundwork is to be found in the ordinary life of a constable in a large and busy town for two or three years, added to a theoretical study of the elementary principles of the criminal law. I am strongly adverse to permanent employment in detective duty, and certainly not for one day beyond the duration of personal inclination for the work. The more the uniform and detective branches of a police service are made interchangeable, the better I am convinced it is, and it would be very advantageous if promotion to the rank of superintendent had necessarily to be preceded by some practical experience as a detective officer.”

It will be seen from these views that the development of a science of criminal investigation is a thing of comparatively

recent growth. Such a thing as training detectives on any systematic plan never entered the head of Howard Vincent when he created the Criminal Investigation Department. Detective work was looked upon as a matter of natural or acquired skill and intuition, to be wedded to experience after arduous years. A man had no short cuts pointed out to him. If he was judged suitable, like Jan Ridd he was thrown headlong into the water to sink or swim—a method of tuition which has obvious disadvantages. That many great detectives who achieved distinction were bred in this way, that crime was held in check and mysteries solved, cannot be denied. Experience teaches. These men, however, originally entered into warfare with the underworld ill-equipped and without effective weapons save such as they might forge for themselves.

A great detective once told the writer how, in his early days, he set to work to learn the world, and gained valuable experience with the deliberation that a young student might apply to the pursuit of an exact science. He took a room in Jermyn Street, and began his studies in every moment he could spare off duty. "I haunted night clubs; I went to gambling houses; I was a frequenter of every resort where one was likely to meet rogues or tricksters. I stored my memory with faces, and made myself friendly with all sorts of people—waiters, barmen, and hall-porters. So it was that I got hints that I should never have obtained by any other method, and scores of times, years afterwards, I received information from the channels I had formed when I began. To show the value of some of these acquaintances I may tell you that when some idea of my identity leaked out at one of these clubs an American crook—he was drunk—declared openly that he would shoot me at sight. A waiter contrived to draw the cartridges from his revolver, and to give me a hint as I entered. And sure enough my man stood up, took aim, and pulled the trigger of the empty weapon. I hit him on the jaw and let it rest at that. But, if I hadn't treated that waiter right, I might have been a dead man now."

It was, perhaps, the knowledge that for a long period of years the Scotland Yard detectives had stood unchallenged as the best in the world, that delayed any organised system of training. Round about 1875 the Black Museum came into being, ostensibly for the instruction of young officers, though for long afterwards it was, in fact, little more than a show place, wherein privileged visitors might see the grim relics of great crimes.

But it must be placed to the credit of Sir Edward Henry that he was the first to recognise that natural ability needed to be reinforced by proper instruction if the full value of a detective service was to be obtained. A school was therefore established at Scotland Yard and placed under the charge of a detective inspector who had a gift of exposition. This developed in its scope in 1913, and now, though it is primarily intended for recruits for the London C.I.D., it is extensively used by many provincial police forces which send their men there for instruction. Instructional courses in finger-print work were also established and have been taken advantage of in a like manner.

Budding detectives are nowadays caught young. Careful watch is kept on all young constables for qualities of resource, temperament, initiative, and intelligence, and they are placed in plain clothes on some special occasions. Either by recommendation or by application they are considered for the Criminal Investigation Department. The first test applied to them is based on their looks. They may look like what they please in the wide world save and only detectives. It is a fatal disqualification to look like a police officer out of uniform.

Once accepted, a candidate becomes a detective on probation, and is allowed six months to prove himself. It is at the commencement of this period that he finds himself going to school again, with perhaps twenty or thirty others, for two hours a day over a term of eight weeks. The curriculum is an extensive one. There are lectures and lessons on every conceivable subject of which a detective must have some acquaintance. Lantern slides and the collection of criminal apparatus in the Black Museum are used for purposes of illustration.

There are lectures on law, on evidence, on the practice of courts, on medico-legal subjects, on police regulations and practice. The pitfalls that beset a hasty or ignorant officer are pointed out. He is taught the methods of criminals from gambling sharps to forgers, from pickpockets to petty sneak-thieves. He is shown jemmies, and the different marks they may leave, coining implements, shoplifting devices, and the latest apparatus in the march of scientific burglary. He is made aware when he may arrest without a warrant and when a warrant is necessary. All that ingenuity and experience can suggest for the confusion of the criminal is taught him. He is shown where an expert must be called in, and when his own common sense must aid him. He is taught something of locks, something of foot-prints, something of cipher reading. The

uses of finger-prints, the application of photography to the detection of crime, the machinery at his disposal in the Crime Index. He learns the significance of trivialities and the high importance of method.

The gambits of an enquiry are explained, where he must begin, and what he must look for. There is the manner in which he must keep a record, and the way in which to question a witness. Not everyone knows that there is a scientific formula laid down for giving a personal description, and for searching a house for stolen property. These and a hundred other things are made known to him, and meanwhile it is insistently stressed that he must for ever cultivate the qualities of tact, pertinacity, and, above all, truthfulness.

If he has assimilated all this he may look forward without dread to the examination that will determine whether after all he is to be confirmed as a detective or be relegated to the uniformed ranks. This is entirely apart from the educational examination that must be passed for those stages of promotion beneath the rank of inspector. It is a practical professional test, and is conducted by the Chief Constable of the Criminal Investigation Department and two Chief Inspectors.

Examples of some of the questions asked are: "To establish a charge of receiving stolen property against an accused person, what evidence is necessary?" "Explain and give an example of compounding a felony." "What Act provides for the registration of persons carrying on the business of receiving letters and postal packets for reward? Give as fully as possible the provisions of the Act relative to this matter." "What is meant by a 'special enquiry'?" These examinations are compulsory at every step in the detective service. Here is a question put at an examination for promotion to detective sergeant which might form the skeleton of a detective story.

"A night-watchman in going his rounds discovers two men attempting to break open a safe on the premises. Both men make good their escape by a window, but one of them receives a blow on the head from the watchman which causes blood to flow, while the other leaves his jacket behind.

"The watchman can give a fair description of the men. In the jacket left behind, which bears no maker's name, are found the following: (1) A return-half ticket to Birmingham from London. (2) A snapshot of a lady having the appearance of a music-hall performer, signed 'Kitty,' but with no photographer's name. (3) A letter (no envelope) as follows:

“ ‘ KING STREET.

“ ‘ DEAR TOM,

“ ‘ I hope you are coming up on Tuesday. Things are bad here since Bill got his three months.

“ ‘ MARY.’

“ State as fully as you can what steps you suggest should be taken to trace the offenders. How could the articles found be made use of in the enquiry ?”

One part of the examination is a rigid test of observation. A description of a particular man is given, and the candidate is supposed to find him among a mixed crowd of sixty or seventy people by some distinguishing detail of dress, peculiarity of gait, trick of manner, or other detail of personality.

Conversely, of course, he is examined on his ability to draw up a description. There is a formula laid down to guide police officers in this matter, which may be quoted. The form is headed, where possible, by full-face and profile photographs, and the following particulars have to be dealt with :

Name
 Alias, pet, or nickname among relations, friends, or women
 Age (if looks it, or older, or younger)
 Professions or callings (past, present, and possible)
 If single or married, and if so, name of wife and Christian names or pet names of children
 If been or now cohabiting with a man or woman, his or her name, pet or nickname, and particulars concerning him or her
 Wanted for
 Height (tall, short, medium)
 Build (stout, thin, erect, stooping)
 Head (any peculiarity, size of hat)
 Hair (colour, quantity, parting, cut)
 Eyebrows (colour, thick, thin, shape)
 Forehead (high, low, straight, sloping)
 Eyes (blue, grey, hazel, large, small, peculiarities)
 Sight (long, short, wearing glasses, pince-nez, or spectacles)
 Nose (large, small, Jewish, turned up)
 Mouth (open, close shut, shows teeth)
 Lips (thick, thin, protruding, receding)
 Teeth (clean, discoloured, stopped, if any false, especially in front)
 Fingers (long, short, nails, any peculiarities, size of gloves, rings or ring marks on which finger)
 Chin (round, pointed, turned up)
 Ears (large, small, close to head, protruding, with long or short lobe, if pierced)
 Face (long, round, smiling, scowling, wrinkled)
 Complexion (fair, dark, fresh)

Beard (colour, thick or thin, style)	
Moustache (ditto, ends waxed, turned up, etc.)	
Marks, warts, pimples, birthmarks, freckles, tattoo marks, scars, about the face, neck, hands, arms, or person	
Peculiarities of manner, habit (smoking, eating, drinking), appearance, gait, speech, voice, or accomplishments, mental or physical, or defects (<i>e.g.</i> , rupture and wearing a truss, weak knees or ankles, and wearing elastic stockings, etc.)	
Specimen of handwriting	
Companionship	
Dress	
Date of absconding	
Where likely to be found, known, or heard of	

Insistence is laid on an officer obtaining the minutest facts on personal peculiarities. The "Police Code" says:

"The smallest thing may lead to detection. The essential is to give characteristics which cannot be changed, removed, or dyed, and note—everyone is proficient in something, physical or mental, or has a favourite habit, a weak side, a partiality in food, drink, smoke, conversation, companionship, amusement. The skilful officer will get it from those acquainted with the person wanted by plying them with questions, backwards and forwards. They will never communicate it voluntarily, for they will never think of the details. Former female companions may often be useful in filling up blanks. Police should practise taking down descriptions of each other. It looks simple. *It is very difficult.*"

In such a manner is the detective taught the elements of his profession, but his education is not to be regarded as complete. There are things that can only be learned by experience. For example, there is "keeping observation," as the police call it, of which the art of "shadowing" is a part. Let anyone who doubts the difficulties of shadowing try the experiment of keeping sight of a person in a frequented thoroughfare. When a suspect knows or guesses that he is being followed—as he invariably does if it is continued for any length of time—it becomes ten times more difficult. The slightest distraction, the least wavering of vigilance, and a shadowed person may be lost sight of in a matter of seconds. When possible shadowing is always done by detectives in pairs, sometimes in threes. Detective No. 1 shadows the suspect, detective No. 2 shadows his colleague. Then if the suspect stops or turns suddenly No. 1 walks innocently on and No. 2 takes up the chase. It is a wearisome task when a person has to be watched continuously, for it may not be possible to assign a spot with any certainty

for reliefs to continue the trail. "Nominally," said an old detective, "you are not on shadowing duty for more than a certain time—but here is the difficulty. You may begin in Shepherd's Bush or Kennington, and find yourself obliged to follow your man to the Mile End Road or Maida Vale; you may telegraph to the Yard for your relief to meet you in the Euston Road; before he can get there you may have had to trudge off to Finsbury."

"It is an extremely difficult thing," according to ex-Chief Detective Inspector Haigh, "to follow an accomplished old thief. They seem to have some instinctive sense that tells them that they are being followed, or in their language, 'tailed off.' In such circumstances they will turn round the first corner they come to, stand still immediately, and watch whether anyone also turns there. It is then that tact is called for. There inexperienced or slow-witted shadowers come to grief, and Mr. Thief is not slow in deciding that he must either lose his shadower or abandon his outing.

"Some criminals appear to have a quaint kind of humour, for I have known one or two instances where, realising that they were being shadowed, they have led their shadower a long, long chase. Followed for many miles through endless streets by a weary, footsore detective, the quarry has quietly waited at the point from which a start was made, and then notified the detective that the day has been a nice one for a walk."

Shadowing calls for quick wit and fertility of resource, for it is by no means a question of simply following a suspect. A detective may pose as a drunken man, a street hawker, a milkman. He may use a small mirror and keep in front of his quarry, or he may outguess the latter's intentions and "pick him up" at certain points.

I have already said that disguise in any melodramatic fashion is not practised by Scotland Yard men, although at one time there was a "make-up" room at headquarters. But the beginner is taught how a difference in dressing the hair, the combing out or waxing of a moustache, the substitution of a muffler for a collar, a cap for a bowler, will alter his appearance. Three young detectives achieved an important capture by posing as nigger minstrels, with banjos and tambourines complete. At another time a few of them became "waitresses" at a tea-shop in order to watch a suspect across the road. The garb of a clergyman has always been a favourite disguise.

When the young detective begins his career he will carry a

virgin drab-coloured diary in his breast pocket, wherein he will be expected to record every moment spent on duty, every penny he spends.⁵⁴ Any illusions that he may have retained about the romance of his calling are quickly destroyed. Hard labour is his portion. Tiresome and monotonous patrol duty; small enquiries at pawnbrokers'; searching directories to verify addresses, running errands for his superiors, and doing all the small odd jobs are his immediate concern. Only now and again will he be called upon to play a small part in an arrest. But he has ambition or he would not have chosen the detective service. He develops, as an American observer said, "a certain shrewdness and long-headedness in his work because these qualities are essential to promotion. He realises that it pays to succeed; he grows with each case. In time there is developed the typical Scotland Yard detective, cool, keen, patient, resourceful."

CHAPTER XXXVIII

SOME DETECTIVE STORIES

THE police detective nowadays does not run completely to pattern. There is a professional resemblance, as there may be in vocations like the Army or the Bar, but beyond that there is an infinite diversity of personality and tastes and methods—and even ability. Sir Basil Thomson has declared that they may be divided into two classes, the detective and the “thief-catcher.” He defines the thief-catcher as a man of more limited education who has a close acquaintance with the cruder forms of criminals.

There is a half-truth in this. The business of a detective after all, is thief-catching, and, from the point of view of the public, so long as he does so it does not matter very much whether he is familiar with quadratic equations, or whether, like that old officer who reported a Royal personage as arriving safely “exorted by a troop of dragons,” he has no use for the subtleties of education.⁵⁵ The “thief-taker” type is still not unknown, even in the higher grades of the service, and there have been men of this sort whose rugged common sense has carried them to success where more subtle men would have failed. Education in some sense may have its drawbacks. An Oxford graduate might find the work of an East End detective beyond his capacity and understanding. The detective, unless he is a supremely gifted man—and they are just as rare at Scotland Yard as anywhere else—must conform to the colour of his surroundings.

One of the ablest detectives who served at Scotland Yard was the late Superintendent Shore, who served under, and followed Williamson. Yet he was a man of extremely limited education. While adding an official comment to a sergeant’s report, he suddenly asked: “How do you spell ‘very’—with one *r* or two *r*’s? Nothing to laugh at.” He was assured that one *r* would meet the case. “That’s all right, then,” he remarked. “If I make a blot over the second *r* all that is necessary will have been done.”

There was also the case of the sergeant who underwent an examination for promotion. He expressed a little concern because he was not sure whether he had put one *f* or two in the word "enough."

Of the days when education of some sort was beginning to be insisted upon, the former Chief Detective Inspector Haigh tells the following story: "A dear old comrade of mine, named Garner, one of the most level-headed men I have met, and a natural thief-catcher, had failed over and over again to qualify for promotion. His difficulty was spelling. On the last occasion that he failed to satisfy the examiners he attended before the then superintendent to be acquainted with the fact and the reason. He commented:

"Well, sir, I can't understand how it is. I don't reckon a fellow is much of a scholar if he can spell a word only one way. I think the best must be the chap that can do it half a dozen ways. That's the lines I've gone on, and I think it best."

After all, spelling was not a strong point with Shakespeare. These men knew their business in their day. Nevertheless the day of the completely illiterate detective is done. The educational fences that he has to take at various stages in his career may not prove anything beyond his academic qualifications, but they ensure that he can hold his own in any average society. An educated man—other things being equal—has always had the chance of getting a foot in the detective service. But, recruited as the police force now is from men of generally higher standards of life, the choice has become wider, and the type is at least equal to that of the smart, middle-class business man. The detective lives in his suburban home, goes to business, and in his moments of recreation likes to dabble in gardening, go to the theatre, or play a game of golf exactly like ordinary mortals.

Nerve and resource are, of course, essentials of his calling. There was an inspector who suspected murder and made sure of his man by arresting him for being in the unlawful possession of a pickaxe handle. In another recent case a murderer was originally charged with stealing a cheque form. Superintendent Arthur Neil, one of the most adroit and pertinacious of modern detectives, arrested Smith, the "brides-in-the-bath" murderer, for making a false entry in a marriage register.

This latter case may be recalled as one of the most dramatic instances of complete detective work in the history of Scotland

Yard. Shortly before Christmas in 1914 a Mr. John Lloyd and his bride took lodgings at Highgate, Lloyd being insistent on there being a bath. The following day the woman was found dead in the bath. At the inquest it was decided that death was accidental. For some weeks nothing happened. Then a newspaper cutting came to the Criminal Investigation Department detailing a similar case which had occurred at Blackpool. Neil, then divisional detective inspector at Kentish Town, in whose district Highgate stood, took the matter in hand.

There was nothing to go on but the coincidence. The whole thing was possibly a mare's nest. But Neil saw to it that Lloyd was closely watched, and there began an investigation that ultimately led to forty towns and involved taking statements from 150 witnesses.

It was found that Lloyd, whose real name was George Joseph Smith, was an ex-convict, who for years had been a bigamist and a defrauder of women. He had married at Bristol. He "married" next at Southampton, and deserted a girl with all of her property that he could lay his hands upon. He "married" a Miss Mundy at Weymouth, and absconded with all her cash. Some eighteen months later he fell in with her again, and induced her to go with him to lodgings at Herne Bay. There she made a will in his favour. Since their apartments did not boast a bath he bought one from a local ironmonger, and three days afterwards Miss Mundy was found dead in it. A verdict of death from misadventure was recorded, and Smith received all her property. Again he "married" a Miss Burnham at Southsea, insured her life, induced her to make a will, and murdered her in a bath at Blackpool. Once more he "married" and deserted another woman before he persuaded a Miss Lofty to go through a marriage ceremony with him at Bath. This was the woman who was found dead at Highgate.

The multiplicity of labour involved in tracing out the facts which I have summarised may be conceived. It may be of interest to turn to some parts of Neil's official narrative and to read between the lines how he built up his case.

There was Miss Burnham, for instance. The detective recorded the story of her murder in this fashion:

20/10/13 she drew all her money from the bank, £27 19s. 5d., and on 3/11/13 prisoner introduced her to Mr. Pleasance, an insurance agent, with the result that she was insured for £500. On the

- 4/11/13 the prisoner married her at Portsmouth Registry Office in the name of George Joseph Smith. He immediately commenced application to Mr. Burnham for the £100, which Mr. Burnham declined to send as he was suspicious of the man and desired to know something of his antecedents, and for this purpose consulted Mr. Redhead, solicitor, of Aylesbury, who wrote to the prisoner asking him something about himself, and in reply Mr. Burnham received an insulting postcard stating that his mother was a cab-horse, etc. Every obstacle was put in the way of the money being sent, and the prisoner threatened to commence proceedings. Mr. Burnham was eventually advised to part with the money, and on
- 29/11/13 he forwarded £104 1s. 1d. to his solicitor, who sent it on to prisoner through his solicitor. It is known that this money was paid by the prisoner into his own banking account. On
- 4/12/13 the insurance on Miss Burnham's life was completed, and the premium of £24 17s. 1d. paid. This was no doubt the money drawn out of the P.O. On
- 8/12/13 Miss Burnham called on Mr. March, solicitor, Portsmouth, and made a will in favour of her husband. On
- 10/12/13 prisoner and Miss Burnham went to Blackpool and called on Mrs. Marsden at 25, Adelaide Street, but declined to take rooms there as there was no bath there, and they were recommended to go to Regent's Road, where they took lodgings with Mrs. Crossley. The same day they called on Dr. Billing, where the prisoner explained that his wife had a headache in consequence of a train journey. She was prescribed for. On
- 11/12/13 Miss Burnham asked for a bath, which was prepared by Mrs. Crossley, and shortly after the prisoner went to Mrs. Crossley and said he could not make his wife hear. She was found dead in her bath by prisoner and Mrs. Crossley. Dr. Billing was sent for, and on
- 13/12/13 an inquest was held, and a verdict of death from drowning was returned. A funeral was arranged for to take place on
- 15/12/13, and on the day before Miss Burnham's mother and brother went to Blackpool to be present at the funeral. The same day Smith left them (immediately after the funeral), and said he had to get back to Portsmouth. They never saw him again, though he promised to write. He went to 80, Kimberley Road, sold all Miss Burnham's belongings, and then went to London, where he approached Kingsbury and Turner, solicitors, Brixton, on
- 18/12/13 with a view to them obtaining probate. On
- 22/12/13 he returned to Miss Pegler at Bristol, when he said he had been to Spain and had done fairly well. On the
- 19/1/14 he received the money from the insurance under Burnham's will through Heath and Eckersall, Cheltenham, to whom he had gone after Kingsbury and Turner had obtained probate. He resided in Cheltenham some time with Pegler. The money paid under the insurance was £506, and on
- 22/1/14 with this money, he increased his annuity to the extent of £500. With Miss Pegler he then went to Bristol.

This will illustrate the painstaking care and thoroughness with which Neil followed up the case. As fact was fitted to fact, it became obvious that cold-blooded murder had been committed. Smith, who had not been lost sight of since the investigation started, was arrested on a minor charge, and the problem submitted to Sir Bernard Spilsbury, the Home Office pathologist. A number of experiments in reconstruction of the crimes were made, with the help of nurses in bathing costumes. Sir Bernard Spilsbury found that the bath used in the murder of Miss Burnham measured eleven inches across near the bottom end, and nineteen at the top end. The position of the body suggested that the woman had sat at the narrow end of the bath. But this was in the highest degree unlikely. The pathologist hit upon the solution.

The murderer had suddenly submerged the girl's head with one hand, at the same time raising her legs out of water with the other hand under her knees. His method of seizing the woman had led to her body being inverted in the bath, and hence, when the crime was discovered, it seemed as if she had originally seated herself at the narrow end.

After an eight days' trial at the Old Bailey Smith was convicted, and ultimately hanged. The judge observed: "I think that this conviction . . . is largely due to the care and assiduity with which Inspector Neil has pursued the threads of this complicated case, and I have pleasure in saying so in public."

Detective work is not always a question of detection. One of the most daring and resolute exploits ever performed by a Scotland Yard man was that of Frank Froest in carrying out so apparently simple a task as bringing back a prisoner to take his trial.

Jabez Balfour, a figure of note in political and business circles, had absconded to the Argentine after the crash of the Liberator Building Society, in which investors lost between five and six million pounds. There was no extradition treaty then existing between this country and the Argentine, and although Scotland Yard knew where the fugitive was and badly wanted him, delicate and difficult negotiations had to be carried out between the Foreign Offices of the two countries. A detective inspector was sent out to the Argentine to kick his heels in such patience as he might possess while diplomatic processes went their tortuous way.

As Balfour had money, and officialdom in the Argentine was

not indisposed to dip its fingers in his purse, complication after complication cropped up, until it looked as if he might spend his life defying British justice. For a couple of years this went on. Then the officer who was waiting at Buenos Ayres for the skein to be untangled was recalled. Froest, at that time a detective inspector, was ordered to take up the case.

"You will go out to the Argentine," said Sir Robert Anderson, "and we don't want to see you back until you've got your man. Remember you are not to come back without Balfour. I don't suppose we shall see you at the Yard for five years."

Thus it was that Froest sailed. Meantime the fugitive had fled a thousand miles up country to the primitive settlement of Salta. The British Consul at Buenos Ayres explained to Froest that the diplomats had come to an agreement. It had been decided that the Governor of Salta should hand over the fugitive, and that Froest and a vice-consul should escort him to the coast. The Consul, however, did not think that things were likely to be as simple as that. "Balfour," said Froest, "was nominally in the custody of the Argentine authorities when I went out. That I knew might mean anything or nothing. In the book he wrote after his release from prison, he declared that he could at any time have escaped with their connivance and assistance. I think that true. But I find it hard to believe that he refused their offers. What happened was that events after my arrival moved a bit more quickly and in a different manner from what they had expected."

Froest wasted no time at Buenos Ayres. With a vice-consul he made the two days' journey in a ramshackle train down to Salta. There they stayed with a friend, a ranch-owner, and ostensibly enjoyed themselves with a few days' shooting while they reviewed the situation. Balfour was unperturbed by their advent. He had taken his precautions, and he had good friends.

The detective, who has a faculty of making friends, cultivated the acquaintance of the stationmaster. One train a day ran to the coast, but Froest foresaw that this might be taken into account in the plans of Balfour's friends. He arranged that a special train should be in waiting whenever he needed it.

I quote Mr. Froest again. "The days went by. At last I judged the time ripe and the vice-consul sent in a demand on the governor for my prisoner.

“ ‘Very good,’ was the reply. ‘He will be surrendered to you at twelve o’clock to-morrow.’

“Now that was some time after the train from Buenos Ayres would have left. Some scheme was afoot, and I had no difficulty in guessing what it might be. Balfour would come meekly forward to surrender, and I should be left with him on my hands for a matter of twenty-four hours. Meanwhile there would be legal difficulties—a local writ, perhaps, for failure to satisfy debt.

“ ‘There may be trouble,’ said the friend with whom the vice-consul and I were staying. ‘Suppose we lend you some peons in case of an attempted rescue.’

“ ‘If there’s trouble we’ll have to handle it ourselves,’ I replied. ‘To take down a body of men will only be inviting it.’

“So the vice-consul and myself rode down to the station with revolvers in our pockets, and leaving our luggage behind us. For all I know mine is still there; I never saw it again. We waited near the station, and I saw to it that our special was at hand with steam up. Presently a little group of officials drew near us, Jabez Balfour in the middle, prepared to surrender with all the good grace of one playing in a pleasant little farce.”

Froest’s trump card was, of course, the special train. It was a move in the game that had not occurred to the embezzler and his friends. Balfour was handcuffed, and almost before he realised that he was in danger of being outwitted, he was hustled into the waiting special. It should here be said that in his younger days Froest was a man of very great physical strength.

Consternation, which they scarcely attempted to conceal, was evident among the little group of officials. But their excited protests were cut short by the departure of the train. In the one coach the vice-consul stood guard over the prisoner. Froest was on the footplate, where he could keep his eye upon the driver. He was taking as few chances as might be necessary.

The rattle-trap special bumped out of the place for a few miles. But Balfour’s friends were not to be cheated so easily. As Froest had suspected, there was a bogus writ out for the arrest of Balfour for debt. A wire was sent along the line, and a sheriff’s officer rode out to intercept the detective and his prisoner. He galloped to cut off the train, waving a paper and shouting at the top of his voice. The engine-driver would

have moved towards his levers; but Froest stepped in front of them, with his back to the horseman.

"No, you don't," he said. "This is a through train."

Man and horse went down, and Balfour, who was taking in the scene from the window of the coach, went pale. "You murderer!" he cried.

Another 800 miles was traversed before anything of further moment happened. Then Froest's train broke down, luckily at a station. He ordered another special to be prepared, but before the journey could be resumed the local police were on the scene. They had received orders by telegraph to arrest Froest and the vice-consul for the murder of the sheriff's officer.

The detective's resource did not fail him. Calm and unmoved, he was the centre of a group of officials, all discussing the affair with animated interest. Meantime the other special was got ready. Again I quote Froest:

" 'Get the prisoner into the other train,' I whispered to the vice-consul. He was a man of quick apprehension, and he wasted no words. I entered with enthusiasm into an argument whether I should be arrested there and then for murder. I explained with voluminous detail, but quite truly, that I had seen nothing of the accident. If one had happened I must have been facing the driver at the time, and it had escaped me. I believe the officials were a little intrigued by the legal point as to whether I had committed murder or manslaughter.

"Anyway, I gradually became rather a spectator than the central figure in the discussion, and when it was at its height I received a signal from the vice-consul that the train was ready. I edged behind the broken-down special into the new one, and the first intimation that my Argentine friends had of my disappearance was when we steamed out. There were no further attempts to stop the train."

Froest's object was to get his prisoner under the British flag as soon as possible. But at Buenos Ayres there was no passenger ship to England, and he was compelled to take passage on a cattle boat. "Once on board, attempt after attempt was made to induce me to give up my prisoner. Indeed, there was a time when it was apprehended that force, with some kind of legality as a mask, might be used. But I had many good friends aboard, cattle ranchers many of them, all men used to the violent happenings of a wild country.

" 'If there's trouble, and you give the word, Mr. Froest,

we'll stand by you,' they said. And I have little doubt that the knowledge they would help me to resist any rescue had its effect."

So Jabez Balfour was brought to England, where, after a lengthy trial, he was sentenced to two terms of seven years' penal servitude.

CHAPTER XXXIX

THE CASE OF CRIPPEN

No attempt has been made here to do more than glance at a few of the more typical, or more singular, cases that have marked the history of the detective service of Scotland Yard. The fundamental methods of detection do not change, but the application and development of science and invention to police work has been illustrated with some of the circumstance of drama on more than one occasion. There was the arrest of Tawell, the Quaker, through telegraphy; the bringing home of murder to the Strattons by a finger-mark; and the capture of Crippen after a world-wide search by the aid of wireless telegraphy. It is of the case of Crippen that I shall here speak.

Dr. Crippen was an American, who had taken certain medical degrees, and had practised during the early years of his professional career in a number of towns in the United States, Canada, and elsewhere, largely in association with the proprietors of patent medicines. He married twice, the second time to an egregiously vain woman in Chicago, who had theatrical ambitions without theatrical talent. This was she whom the world was to know as his ultimate victim. Crippen, by all accounts, was a mild-mannered, quiet, insignificant little man, lavishly indulgent to his stage-struck wife—he paid for her to be trained for grand opera—whom one would imagine to be the last person in the world who would descend to murder and mutilation.

In 1900 Crippen came to London as manager of a patent medicine business, and was later joined by his wife, lavishly bejewelled and in dazzling raiment, avid for the conquest of the London music-hall public. But beyond a trivial engagement or two she achieved no success, and drifted into the habit of frequenting the company of music-hall performers as the next best thing.

The year 1910 found them living in Hilddrop Crescent, Camden Town. It was a strange *ménage*. One of Belle

Elmore's whims had been to take boarders, but this did not last long. The two lived most of the time in the kitchen, and some indication of their domestic life is afforded by a glimpse given by an acquaintance. "It was a warm, humid day, and the grimy windows were all tightly closed. On the dresser was a heterogeneous mass, consisting of dirty crockery edibles, collars of the doctor's, false curls of her own, hairpins, brushes, letters, a gold jewelled purse and other articles. . . . The kitchener and gas stove were brown with rust and cooking stains. The table was littered with packages, saucepans, dirty knives, plates, flat-irons, a washing basin, and a coffee-pot. Thrown carelessly across a chair was a lovely white chiffon gown embroidered with silk flowers and mounted over white *glacé*."

This was their squalid domestic existence while they were entertaining their music-hall friends at restaurants and other places. Belle Elmore was fretful, peevish, and quarrelsome. There was constant bickering, and, as Mr. Filson Young suggests in his account of the case, it was not a matter for much surprise that Crippen should turn to the companionship of a Miss Ethel Le Neve, who acted as his typist, for relief and distraction. But the strain on his resources became heavy.

On the last day of January, 1910, two friends in the music-hall profession dined at Hilldrop Crescent. That was the last time that Belle Elmore was seen alive.

Crippen announced vaguely that his wife had gone to California, and there died of pneumonia. But as the months went on Ethel Le Neve went to live with him at Hilldrop Crescent, and it became a matter of comment among their acquaintances that the girl was wearing furs and jewellery that had belonged to Mrs. Crippen. Three months after Belle Elmore had disappeared a Mr. Nash called at Scotland Yard and saw Superintendent Frank Froest. That acute official went closely into the facts, and reported to Sir Melville Macnaghten. It was decided to have the doctor "shaken up" by a chief inspector.

Chief Inspector Walter Dew was charged with the mission. For a week he made quiet enquiries without any very definite result, and then he went to Hilldrop Crescent, where he met Miss Le Neve, and was taken by her to Crippen's business office. The doctor was not so slow of understanding as to fail to perceive that Dew was sceptical of the story of the death in California. He immediately and with seeming frankness

admitted that he had lied. "I suppose I had better tell the truth," he said.

"I think that will be best," said Dew, drily.

So a tale of marital troubles was unfolded. The effect of it was that Belle Elmore, who had frequently threatened to leave Crippen for a man better able to support her, had quarrelled violently for the last time with him in January, and had disappeared the next day, he assumed with her lover. He had invented the story of her death to stop scandal.

Neither in his tone or manner was there anything to suggest uneasiness as he told his story. Dew, however, could not get over the feeling that it was strange for a woman possessed of the colossal vanity of Belle Elmore to dash away leaving both jewels and clothes behind her. He suggested that Crippen should show him over the house in Hilldrop Crescent, and the little man readily consented. From cellar to attic they went over the place, the detective poking here and there with his stick. Nothing came to his attention that could possibly connect Crippen with any crime—if crime there had been.

"Of course," he said to Crippen, "I shall have to find Mrs. Crippen to clear this matter up."

The doctor assented. So willing was he that he there and then assisted to draw up an advertisement which he proposed to put in the American newspapers. Dew and his assistant, Sergeant Mitchell, went away, and there the matter might very well have ended. Crippen had almost convinced them that the matter was one of a not uncommon sort—rather a question for the Divorce Court than the C.I.D. A description of Mrs. Crippen was circulated to the police, but that was more or less a matter of routine.

There can be little question that had Crippen stood his ground he might have bluffed the matter out successfully. But on reading the statement that the doctor had made Dew thought it worth while to put one or two more questions. He returned to Dr. Crippen's surgery three days later for that purpose. Crippen had gone. Miss Le Neve had gone. Here was matter to fan the almost lulled suspicions in the inspector's mind to a fierce flame.

He began a comprehensive and pertinacious search of the house in Hilldrop Crescent. Stalwart constables with pick-axes and shovels were put to work in the garden, and the house was ransacked. But for two days the searchers were unrewarded. Then in a small coal cellar, while probing about

with a poker, Dew found a loose brick. He at once procured a spade, and after pulling up several more bricks, commenced to dig. In a little he had come across some human remains.

A message was at once sent to Scotland Yard, and the hunt was up. Here I will quote Sir Melville Macnaghten:

"The exact nature of the charge which might at a later stage be preferred against the fugitive was a matter for future consideration. Inquiries were made in every possible direction, but it soon became obvious that we were up against a very tough proposition, and that Dr. Crippen and his partner in flight had completely vanished, and—like the witches in *Macbeth*—had left no rack behind. I have known many busy times at the Yard, but nothing to exceed the rush and worry of the following fortnight.

"Bills in French, as well as in English, were drafted out, giving likenesses, descriptions, and handwritings of the much-wanted couple, and were dispatched to every quarter of the globe. Meanwhile the public favoured us with more correspondence than at any former time in the history of the Yard, with the possible exception of Jack the Ripper's reign of terror. Somebody had seen the fugitives in almost every town in the United Kingdom, and did not hesitate to write and say so. They were quite positive as to the identity of the individuals, but had never taken the trouble to 'locate' them. Therefore no definite inquiries were possible. All that could be done was to send the missives to the local constabularies for 'such steps as might seem to them advisable.'

"The Secretary of State for the Home Department sanctioned the offer of a reward of £250, and we then began to get quite busy with 'foreign intelligence.' Most capitals and many provincial towns in Europe reported that the couple had been seen within their walls on recent dates. Every letter or wire required careful reading, and the work literally went on by night as well as day."

Dr. Crippen and Miss Le Neve had in fact sailed for Rotterdam, and thence made their way to Antwerp in the names of Mr. and Master Robinson. There they had taken passage on the liner *Montrose* for Canada, the girl clumsily disguised in a suit of men's clothes.

But the master of the liner, Captain Kendall, had his suspicions about the pair soon after the ship sailed. It seemed to him unnatural that the "boy" should squeeze her companion's hand, and he watched them carefully without dis-

METROPOLITAN POLICE**£250
REWARD**

HAWLEY HARVEY CRIPPEN, alias
Peter Crippen, alias **Franckel**; and **ETHEL
CLARA LE NEVE**, alias **Mrs. Crippen**,
alias **Neave**,

**WANTED FOR
MURDER AND
MUTILATION**

The above reward will be paid by me
to any person (other than a member of any
Police Force in the United Kingdom) who
gives such information as will lead to the
apprehension of the above named persons.

Information to be given at the
Metropolitan Police Office, New Scotland
Yard, S.W., or at any Police Station

E. R. HENRY,

Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis.

Metropolitan Police Office,
New Scotland Yard, 20A July, 1910.

(17133—1.) W.L.P. 5,000, 7/10. D & S.

closing his suspicions. When he had made up his mind he sent a message by wireless—then in its early days—to his owners. They got in touch with Scotland Yard. Here I must draw again upon Sir Melville Macnaghten:

“After a week or ten days of this kind of strain, as I was dressing for dinner one night the officer in charge of the case rang me up from the Yard to say he had just received, through Liverpool, a curious message, and would like me to see it as soon as possible. This was the marconigram which was to be the key to unlock the whole mystery of the flight and disappearance. I asked the Chief Inspector to come down to my house, and he shortly arrived with the message from the sea. A perusal of the same made it clear that the captain of the *Montrose* was in earnest; but had he been mistaken in the view he took of his passengers?

“At this particular time we had what looked like two good clues in hand, one in Spain and one in Switzerland. But if the contents of the marconigram were genuine, it was imperative that action should be taken at once, and the parties arrested, if possible, before they landed in Canada. A hurried conversation took place between the officer and myself, from which I elicited that he had already worked out trains to, and steamers from, Liverpool; and if he caught the midnight express and was on board a certain boat by 6.30 the next morning, he would, in all human probability, reach the joint destination before the fugitives arrived there. It was a serious step to take to send off the Chief Inspector (who alone held in his hands all the clues of the case, and knew the ramifications of each particular thread, besides being the only officer who had seen and held converse with the wanted man) on a journey of three thousand miles—a journey which might well turn out to be a wild-goose chase. But a decision had to be arrived at, the probabilities of failure or success were weighed up, and, as a result, half a sheet of notepaper was minuted, to the effect that the officer was to leave for Canada at once for the purpose of arresting Dr. Crippen. Wishing the Chief Inspector good luck and God-speed, we shook hands and parted. That night could not fail to be one of anxiety; but the die was cast, the Rubicon was crossed. If the *coup* happened to come off, well and good, but, if otherwise, then the case had been hopelessly messed up, and I did not care to dwell on the eventualities of its future.”

The senior officers at Scotland Yard were found to be sceptical the next day. They were inclined to believe that

Dew had gone on a wild-geese chase. Indeed, on the very meagre facts available they were justified in their doubts. Urgent messages to Antwerp had resulted in descriptions of the Mr. and Master Robinson who had booked passages on the *Montrose* being received. These descriptions did not in the least correspond with those of the wanted pair, and it was only after three or four days, when photographs had been sent over and returned completely identified, that anxiety was set at rest.

Meanwhile, Dew on the *Laurentic* had outstripped the fugitives, and in the guise of a pilot boarded the *Montrose* when the ship was off Father Point. Up to this moment Crippen had been one of the few people in the world who was unaware that his disguise had been penetrated, and that wireless messages of his daily life on board had been published. He was sent for to the captain's cabin, and received the detective with equanimity.

"Good-morning, Dr. Crippen," said Dew. "I am Chief Inspector Dew."

"Good-morning, Mr. Dew," returned Crippen.

The chase was over. Crippen was handcuffed and taken ashore with Miss Le Neve. After the usual formalities they were brought back to England, the man accused of murder and mutilation, the girl as an accessory after the fact.

The arrest of Crippen was one thing, proof of his guilt was another. The small portion of human remains it had seemed at first would be impossible of identity. But Professor Pepper and Dr. Bernard Spilsbury discovered traces of an old scar left by an operation which Mrs. Crippen had undergone. Dr. Wilcox, after brilliant and laborious research, found that a narcotic drug, hyoscin, had been the cause of death. It was found that Crippen had bought five grains of this drug a week or two before Belle Elmore had disappeared. With the remains were buried a pyjama jacket on which was the label "Jones Brothers, Limited, Holloway." This firm had not become a limited company till 1906, while Crippen was in possession of the Hilldrop Crescent house, thus proving conclusively that whoever had buried the remains, it had been during his tenancy of the place. Moreover, it was discovered that three sets of pyjamas of a similar pattern had been sold to Crippen the year before the murder.

After a five days' trial Crippen was found guilty and sentenced to death. Miss Le Neve was put on her trial as an accessory after the fact, and was acquitted.

NOTES

¹ *Page 6, Chapter I.*—He was a Treasury official for this purpose till 1897. As Receiver for the Metropolitan Police he was under the Home Office.

² *Page 10, Chapter II.*—"The ancient peace pledge had, as already shown by reference to innumerable records, been altogether powerless to preserve peace or to give security to life and property. Theoretically, it should have rendered crime impossible. Practically it had been at its strongest when England was in a state of general brigandage." —*Pike, "History of Crime in England."*

³ *Page 10, Chapter II.*—These powers are now conferred by statute. Damages would now be paid out of the Police Fund.

⁴ *Page 11, Chapter II.*—Fielding's brother, Sir John Fielding, said: "The next object in the Consideration of that Magistrate, who weighed and considered the Cause and Increase of Robberies in general, and published them in a small Pamphlet, which has been the Occasion of many good and wholesome Laws and the Cause of many Advantages arising from this institution of a Police; which is nothing more than enabling one or more Magistrates to give up their whole Time to the Public; to be watchful over Evils as they arise in Society, and to suppress them in their Infancy by a due Execution of the Laws: For by habituating Mankind to an Obedience to the Laws of their Country, Peace and good Order imperceptibly arise. And at the same time by bringing all Informations of Fraud and Felony into one Point, keeping a Register of Offenders, making quick Pursuits, opening a general Correspondence with all the active Magistrates in the Country, Escapes are rendered difficult, and Discoveries easy. . . .

"It was intended that this Magistrate should compose and reconcile the Differences among the Poor and thereby prevent litigious suits. . . . That he should be attentive by Day and Night to all Informations of Fraud and Felony, and be vigilant and indefatigable in the Pursuit of Offenders, and by encouraging, instructing, and preserving Harmony among the Peace Officers, and by rewarding them and all other Persons assisting them in fatiguing and dangerous Undertakings. For this Trouble a competent Salary should be allowed, that he might seek for no other Advantage either from the Poor or the Rich, than that of the happy Opportunity of reconciling the Differences of the former, and the pleasing Task of preventing Insults on the latter. . . .

"And it is not to be doubted but that, when the first Promoter of this Plan of a Police has Leisure from Matters of greater Importance to complete it, the Government of this Metropolis will become as easy as that of a Country Village, and many happy Effects arise from it without any Restraint on the Liberty of the Subject: For let the weak or the wicked laugh at or abuse this Police as they please, every true Briton must have this Satisfaction to reflect, that no private Person whatever, no Watchman, Beadle, Constable or Magistrate, can unjustly deprive him of his Liberty or Property with Impunity."

⁵ *Page 11, Chapter II.*—Officially he was “Principal Acting Magistrate for the County of Middlesex and City and Liberty of Westminster.”

⁶ *Page 11, Chapter II.*—The Duke of Newcastle.

⁷ *Page 12, Chapter II.*—There had been an increase of street robberies in 1821, which had caused the foot patrols to be withdrawn to inner London. Thus the dismounted patrol was brought about to link them with the horse patrol by guarding suburban roads.

⁸ *Page 29, Chapter IV.*—The first Exchequer grant in aid of the Metropolitan Police was in 1833, when it was directed that a sum not exceeding £60,000 per annum should be paid out of the Consolidated Fund.

⁹ *Page 31, Chapter IV.*—Sir Robert Peel, writing to the Duke of Wellington on November 5, 1829, said: “The chief danger of the failure of the new police system will be if it is made a job, if gentlemen’s servants and so forth are placed in the higher offices. I must frame regulations to guard against this as effectually as I can.”

¹⁰ *Page 31, Chapter IV.*—At some later period the height standard was reduced. In 1855 it was 5 feet 7 inches.

¹¹ *Page 32, Chapter IV.*—Before the Select Committee of 1834, Mayne and Rowan explained the method of dealing with complaints: “A letter is sent off immediately to say that the complaint will be enquired into, probably the same moment the complaint is made; the constant practice is to have that letter prepared immediately and given into the hand of the person who makes the complaint, stating that the complaint will be enquired into immediately, in order that they should feel a satisfaction that the thing should be done, without waiting for the result, which sometimes cannot be got at for several days, as enquiry may occupy a good deal of time. After the complaint has been enquired into, the result in some shape or other is always made known to the person who has preferred the complaint. . . . Generally the arrangement is such that the parties coming in to complain are heard almost immediately; I should say immediately. We always give precedence to them before the other business with our own people; and generally such an hour has been appointed that we see them the moment they come.”

¹² *Page 32, Chapter IV.*—In 1838 the Metropolitan Police District was an area of twelve miles from Charing Cross.

¹³ *Page 33, Chapter IV.*—In 1839 a payment of £20,000 a year was sanctioned as a contribution from the Exchequer in consideration of the transfer of the duties of the horse patrol and the Thames Police to the Metropolitan Police. This was later merged into the general Government contribution.

¹⁴ *Page 34, Chapter IV.*—Resolutions in similar terms were passed by the Court of Aldermen and the Court of Common Council in February, 1838:

“That this Court has received with surprise the communication from Lord John Russell dated the 23rd instant, addressed to Mr. Alderman Venables, announcing the opinion of Her Majesty’s Government that the Police of the City ought to be placed under the Com-

missioners of the Metropolitan Police, and that Her Majesty's Ministers intend to propose a measure for accomplishing that object; and this Court is fully persuaded that had an enquiry been previously instituted by them it would have been incontrovertibly proved that the wealth and property of this City comprising so large a proportion of the merchandise of the kingdom has been subject to less depredation than in any other part of the country.

"Resolved, That the expenses of the City Day Police are defrayed out of the funds of the Corporation of London without any taxation of the inhabitants of the City for such purpose.

"Resolved, That this Court cannot, consistently with the interests of the Corporation, and a due regard to its privileges, suffer the funds of the Corporation or any part of them to be placed at the disposal of the Government, or subjected in any respect to its control.

"Resolved, That if the proposed object be to adopt one uniform system of Police, and such object should appear desirable, this Court is of opinion that means may be adopted fully to effect that object without destroying or impairing the valuable franchises of the citizens of London, which, with the exception of the seizure of the charters of this City in the reign of Charles the Second, and by Act of the Legislature afterwards declared to be illegal and arbitrary, have been uninterruptedly enjoyed by them from the earliest periods of their history to the present time, and which the several members of this Court are bound by their oaths to maintain."

¹⁵ *Page 34, Chapter IV.*—This Committee declared: "Your Committee cannot conclude their Report without bestowing great and well-deserved commendation upon the excellent management and satisfactory conduct of the Metropolitan Police Force, which appears to be the subject of approbation upon every occasion in which their services are capable of being publicly noticed."

¹⁶ *Page 36, Chapter V.*—Quaintly enough the presence of Irishmen in the force has always been a little problem for Commissioners. In 1855 Sir Richard Mayne said: "I am not likely to object to Irishmen as Irishmen; but for the special purposes of police in this town in certain parts of the town there are objections to it, and accordingly the number in certain divisions has been very much restricted, and returns are always made to myself of the number of Irish appointed each month, and the divisions to which they are assigned. In some parts of the town principally inhabited by Irish it was found objectionable that the police should be Irish." At this time there were in the force 4,416 Englishmen, 145 Scotsmen, and 370 Irishmen.

Sir Nevil Macready, Commissioner in 1918-19, said: "During the time I was Commissioner I refused to enrol Irishmen in the force on the grounds that in their own country the Royal Irish Constabulary offered openings to any who wished to become the upholders of law and order."

¹⁷ *Page 39, Chapter V.*—There was no distinction between inspectors save seniority for many years.

¹⁸ *Page 47, Chapter VI.*—The extent to which Superintendents exercised their powers is shown by a table of drunkenness charges from 1831 to 1837.

				Arrested.	Discharged by Superintendents when Sober.
1831	..	..	..	31,353	23,787
1832	..	..	..	32,636	25,702
1833	..	..	..	29,880	18,487
1834	..	..	..	19,779	} All taken before magistrates after August, 1833.
1835	..	..	..	21,794	
1836	..	..	..	22,728	
1837	..	..	..	21,426	

¹⁹ *Page 48, Chapter VI.*—The general hours of duty at this period were: In winter two-thirds of the force were on duty from nine at night till six in the morning. The whole of the day relief then went on from six till eight a.m. Half of this number then went off till two o'clock, and relieved their comrades from two till five p.m., when the whole of the day relief resumed duty. These hours were changed during the summer months. A policeman attending the courts in connection with a charge did so out of his own time.

²⁰ *Page 50, Chapter VI.*—In 1838 Colonel Rowan said: "We have sent into the country since the first establishment of the police between two thousand and three thousand men at different times, and both from their reports and the reports which they invariably bring back with them from those persons by whom they have been employed, magistrates and others, we have every reason to believe that their moral influence at such places has been as great, or perhaps greater, than within their own district." To which Mayne added: "And we believe from the personal good conduct of the men a general respect is felt in consequence for them."

²¹ *Page 61, Chapter VIII.*—The late Chief Inspector Cavanagh says of Cremorne Gardens: "The scenes enacted there late at night were no doubt sufficient to make the hair of the straight-laced stand up in horror, not to speak of the disorderly and disreputable scenes that constantly took place outside after the entertainments were over. The neighbours . . . began to agitate for the suppression of the Gardens; a prominent clergyman or two lent their aid to the movement; a portion of the Press joined in, coupled with a determined stand on the part of a few of the Middlesex magistrates, and at last, in 1877, the finish took place."

²² *Page 65, Chapter VIII.*—At some date, it is said, the men of the division were transferred to other districts where temptation was less strong, and opportunities more restricted. I can find no official record of this transfer, but it is quite possible that it did occur. The police would scarcely be likely to advertise the business.

²³ *Page 66, Chapter IX.*—Ratcliffe Highway is now St. George's Street, Stepney, E., a highly respectable thoroughfare.

²⁴ *Page 74, Chapter X.*—Although nominally Joint Commissioner, Captain Hay was not so in reality. A regulation approved by the Home Secretary on January 2, 1850, declared: "That one Com-

missioner should be primarily responsible as First Commissioner for the general management of the service; the Second Commissioner, receiving his appointment upon an understanding that such a distinction was recognised, would feel it his duty to act in concert with the First, and the duties of each would be easily arranged." In other words, Hay was to play second fiddle.

²⁵ *Page 79, Chapter X.*—"It appears that at one time 43 persons were shut up in a basement cell imperfectly ventilated, and said to have been disused except as a place of confinement for refractory prisoners. The dimensions of this cell were 24 feet in length by 8 feet in breadth, and the height 7 feet 10 inches. The asphalt floor was wet with water, and there was an open convenience in one corner. The sufferings of the 43 inmates or of the 33 who ultimately remained there during the sultry night may be imagined."—*Report of the Royal Commission, 1855.*

²⁶ *Page 104, Chapter XIII.*—One man whose death was alleged to be due to his injuries had inscribed on his coffin plate: "Murdered by the Police."

²⁷ *Page 105, Chapter XIII.*—There were jars on this matter even in Scotland Yard itself. "At one time," said Sir Howard Vincent, "there was a good deal of hostility between the civil service branch and the police, owing perhaps to defects on both sides, which was detrimental to the public interest. The civil service branch had the checking of an account, for instance, and they would raise the most interminable quibbles over a cab or an omnibus, and say, 'Why did not the man walk?' The police were engaged in never-ending discussions with the civil service branch, and it led to much friction."

²⁸ *Page 110, Chapter XIV.*—Mr. Clinton Dent, Chief Surgeon of the Metropolitan Police, told a Royal Commission in 1906: "Broadly speaking, a constable is usually worn out, as regards the efficient performance of his duty, at the age of forty-five."

²⁹ *Page 114, Chapter XV.*—There was a deal of red tape during Bradford's regime. The Head Constable of Liverpool was refused permission to see the Metropolitan Police Regulations on the ground that it "was a privileged document."

³⁰ *Page 119, Chapter XV.*—One of the gentlemen affected wrote to Sir Edward Henry: "The acts of perjury and brutality committed by certain members of the Metropolitan Police Force constitute a grave public scandal and danger calling for stern and immediate repression."

³¹ *Page 121, Chapter XV.*—"We have no hesitation in coming to the conclusion that the Metropolitan Police Force as a whole discharge their duties in connection with the three classes of offences mentioned in our terms of reference with honesty, discretion, and efficiency."

³² *Page 130, Chapter XVI.*—A war bonus of three shillings a week was granted in 1915, and increased to twelve shillings in 1917. A children's allowance of one shilling weekly, granted in 1916, was increased to two shillings and sixpence in 1917. In addition a bonus of ten shillings a week was held in reserve for lump sum payment to all men of twenty-five years' service compulsorily retained till the end of the war. This could, and often did, amount to £150.

³³ *Page 132, Chapter XVI.*—Mr. Lloyd George does not seem to have consulted any of the chief officials of police. Sir Edward Henry declares that he was "jettisoned" at this time. He was strongly opposed to the reinstatement of Thiel. "The Government on Friday night said they were not going to put back Thiel, and he was put back on Saturday morning. The Commissioner did not know."

³⁴ *Page 133, Chapter XVI.*—"The police were created for the prevention and the detection of crime and the maintenance of order. I have never yet heard it held that they have fallen below the high standard of efficiency for the maintenance of order and the prevention and detection of crime, whether you gauge their action by the criminal statistics, or by their regulation of traffic, or by their control of the largest crowds that have ever flocked together."—*Sir Edward Henry to the Desborough Committee, 1919.*

³⁵ *Page 133, Chapter XVI.*—"It is quite wrong in any way to underestimate the Superintendent. It is not that he leans on the Commissioner. He never leant on me. I leant on him always. He is an exceptional man. He is a man who has come through twenty thousand competitors. He has won his way through twenty thousand men, and a man cannot achieve that position without possessing remarkable qualifications. . . . The real pivot of administration must be the Superintendent."—*Sir Edward Henry to the Desborough Committee, 1919.*

³⁶ *Page 134, Chapter XVI.*—Sir Nevil Macready's change was not really so revolutionary as he implies. The Royal Commission of 1906 outlined the duties performed by Chief Constables at that time. There is no reason to suppose that they had changed: "The whole of the Metropolitan Police District is divided into three districts, and each of these three districts is allotted to a Chief Constable. . . . The Chief Constables supervise generally all matters connected with the organisation and discipline within their respective districts, and are responsible that all infringements of the Regulations laid down for the guidance of the police that may come to their notice are reported to the Commissioner."

³⁷ *Page 135, Chapter XVI.*—A Departmental Committee in 1877 recommended that the Assistant Commissioner of the Criminal Investigation Department should be in control of the whole force during the absence of the Commissioner

³⁸ *Page 135, Chapter XVI.*—A new post.

³⁹ *Page 135, Chapter XVI.*—The new Commissioner's methods aroused some not unnatural resentment among the higher officials. Major H. M. Tomlin, one of the Chief Constables, told the Desborough Committee: "In the past it has been the custom to select officers for the rank of Assistant Commissioner—certainly Assistant Commissioner Administrative, who deals with questions of discipline, promotion, and so on of the personnel—from officers of considerable police experience as in the case of the last holder, Sir Frederick Wodehouse, who came from the City Police. His predecessor, Sir Charles Howard, was a Chief Constable in the Metropolitan Police. When an additional Assistant Commissioner was appointed by statute in 1906, a serving Chief Constable was appointed. On his death a

Chief Constable was promoted to succeed him. The other Assistant Commissioners who have been brought in were officials with public service in the Home Office, and we do feel that when a new Commissioner was appointed after the upheaval in August, it did not give us much outlook for the future to find that two officers a good deal junior to us, who would hold their office for some time as far as one could see—one of whom had some little police experience, the other having none—were appointed over our heads. During the whole term of the war the Chief Constables had handed over to them a great deal of the work hitherto performed by Assistant Commissioners, and, as far as we know, we have done that work satisfactorily."

⁴⁰ *Page 156, Chapter XIX.*—The educational test in 1906 consisted of reading and dictation "from Royal Reader No. 3," and in arithmetic of "numeration to 100,000 and the four simple rules—viz., Addition, Subtraction, Multiplication, and Division."

It was added: "Constables joining the Force will be employed on Station duty, and in the attending of Police Courts during the hearing of both charges and summonses. They are also to be instructed by an officer appointed by the Superintendent for one hour daily as to the Regulations of the Service, and to be examined occasionally by the Superintendent, who is to report on Form 250a to the Commissioner at the expiration of fourteen days, whether the Constable is likely to become an efficient member of the Force. Men for the first six months after joining are to be assembled at least for one hour, once in fourteen days, and carefully questioned by the Inspectors as to their knowledge of the contents of the Police Instruction Book; and they should be encouraged to ask the examining Inspectors to explain to them any parts of the Regulations or Orders they may be unable to understand."

⁴¹ *Page 161, Chapter XIX.*—A constable must have at least five years' service before he is promoted. He has to serve three years as sergeant to become eligible as station sergeant, another three years for an inspectorship, and so on through the grade of subdivisional inspector to chief inspector. Superintendents are promoted by selection. On an average it takes twenty-seven years to reach this rank.

⁴² *Page 161, Chapter XIX.*—It was about 1857 that educational tests for promotion began. This was due to the late Superintendent Kittle, then of the Executive Branch. "I well remember," says Cavanagh, "Kittle, looking as demure as an old owl, asking aspirants for promotion how many sixes there were in seven, while the Assistant Commissioner presided over the proceedings in the stateliest manner."

⁴³ *Page 184, Chapter XXIII.*—"From the case of Miss Cass onwards every mistake has been given great notoriety and excited great public interest. Few have compared the large volume of work carried out by the police with the relatively small number of their mistakes."—*Mr. Edward Shortt, Home Secretary, 1919-22.*

⁴⁴ *Page 188, Chapter XXIII.*—"As a matter of fact, Beck and Thomas were not a bit alike. They were about the same height and had about the same amount of grey hair on their heads, and they both struck me as having rather a peculiar droop in the eyelids. But Beck

gave me the impression of being a much younger man, and he was altogether slighter in build."—*Sir Melville Macnaghten*.

⁴¹ *Page 191, Chapter XXIV*.—Referring to the early eighties, Sir Howard Vincent said: "At one time murders and attempted murders of the police were very frequent. There were about six or seven cases in one year, and I took a vote of all the police going on duty on several days as to whether under the circumstances they would like to have a pistol themselves, and, although there were a few of the young men who answered in the affirmative, the very large majority of the men said: 'On no account.' They thought it would be both dangerous to themselves individually, and might involve them in some cases of improper use, besides trials for murder, that one could not think of making the change at all."

⁴⁶ *Page 251, Chapter XXX*.—Mr. James J. Thompson, who became Superintendent at Bow Street, entered the detective service sometime in the fifties as a sergeant without any preliminary police experience. The late Detective Inspector Sagar, who was medical student, became a detective off-hand in the City of London Police.

⁴⁷ *Page 258, Chapter XXXI*.—Before Sir Howard Vincent's time Scotland Yard did not interfere with certain swindlers unless their aid was directly invoked. "The fear was," said the late Chief Detective Inspector Littlechild, "that the liberty of the subject might be imperilled; and the rogues and thieves took full advantage of this reluctance to upset our boasted English freedom. But when Mr. Vincent became Director of the Criminal Investigation Department he, with great courage, would direct the initiation of proceedings, or the breaking up of gangs of swindlers, where prosecutions could not be obtained for want of some person to take proceedings."

⁴⁸ *Page 260, Chapter XXXI*.—"Few officers in the service could maintain their position . . . unless their pay was supplemented by extras in the shape of rewards or gratuities."—*The late Chief Detective Inspector Littlechild*. "After I became a member of the permanent staff of the Yard and received such gratuities as I earned I reckoned them to be worth half the amount of my pay to me taking the year all round."—*The late Detective Inspector Meiklejohn*.

⁴⁹ *Page 263, Chapter XXXI*.—As in later days the question of tracing the murderer by means of bloodhounds was mooted. A touch of amusement was added to the tragedies by a highly placed police officer who arranged to be hunted by bloodhounds in Hyde Park.

⁵⁰ *Page 265, Chapter XXXII*.—"Scotland Yard, after taking the lead in the introduction of finger prints, has been passed and out-classed in the further extensions of criminal identification and crime detection. . . . For the last ten years there seems to have been a deep-rooted opposition at Scotland Yard to change and innovation. . . ."—*Mr. Raymond B. Fosdick, "European Police Systems," 1915*.

⁵¹ *Page 267, Chapter XXXII*.—One of the troubles before this was that the divisional detectives were responsible both to the Superintendent of the division and to the chief officers of the Criminal Investigation Department. "Every detective officer in a division

apart from the Central Branch," Sir Basil Thomson told the Desborough Committee, "serves two masters. All his reports go to his inspector, and from him to the uniform superintendent who forwards them with a comment—generally just passes them on—and the chain is kept up until they come to me. Therefore every detective officer working in a division has to please a uniform superintendent, he has to please me, and he has to satisfy the courts." For the initiation of the new scheme Sir Basil Thomson was largely responsible.

⁵² *Page 277, Chapter XXXIII.*—"Officers of the Criminal Investigation Department, one attached to each division (A to Thames inclusive) and one from the Convict Supervision Office, are to parade outside H.M. Prison, Holloway, at 9.45 p.m. on every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, in order that they may inspect prisoners on remand, or committed for trial, for purposes of identification."—*Police Regulations.*

⁵³ *Page 295, Chapter XXXV.*—New regulations for identification parades were laid down shortly after this case. In essentials they follow very closely the old orders. Identifications are to be carried out by a station officer, and care has to be observed that persons assembled to take part in the parade do not know which is the prisoner. The accused person has a right to stand where he will in the rank, and is to be informed that he has a right to have a solicitor or a friend present.

⁵⁴ *Page 309, Chapter XXXVII.*—"Diaries," says an official order "are to form an absolute record of all proceedings. . . . General entries will not be accepted. When enquiry is made it must be stated when and for what purpose, and similarly the object in view in visiting certain places. Impressions may be usefully recorded, and even matters not of a strictly official character. The information contained by the mere entry 'Patrolling' in the diaries is insufficient, for it is almost impossible that a vigilant officer sees nothing worthy of closer notice."

⁵⁵ *Page 310, Chapter XXXVIII.*—"I can recall several instances of some of the best detectives we have had for whom we have had to get the Secretary of State's special authority to promote them without their undergoing the usual examination because we knew they would not pass it. They develop an aptitude; they have initial capacity, and concentrate on that particular work and become experts at it. I do not say that that applies to them as a class."—*Mr. G. H. Gardner, in evidence before the Desborough Committee, 1919.*

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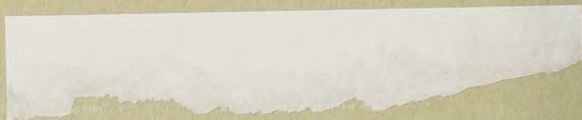
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